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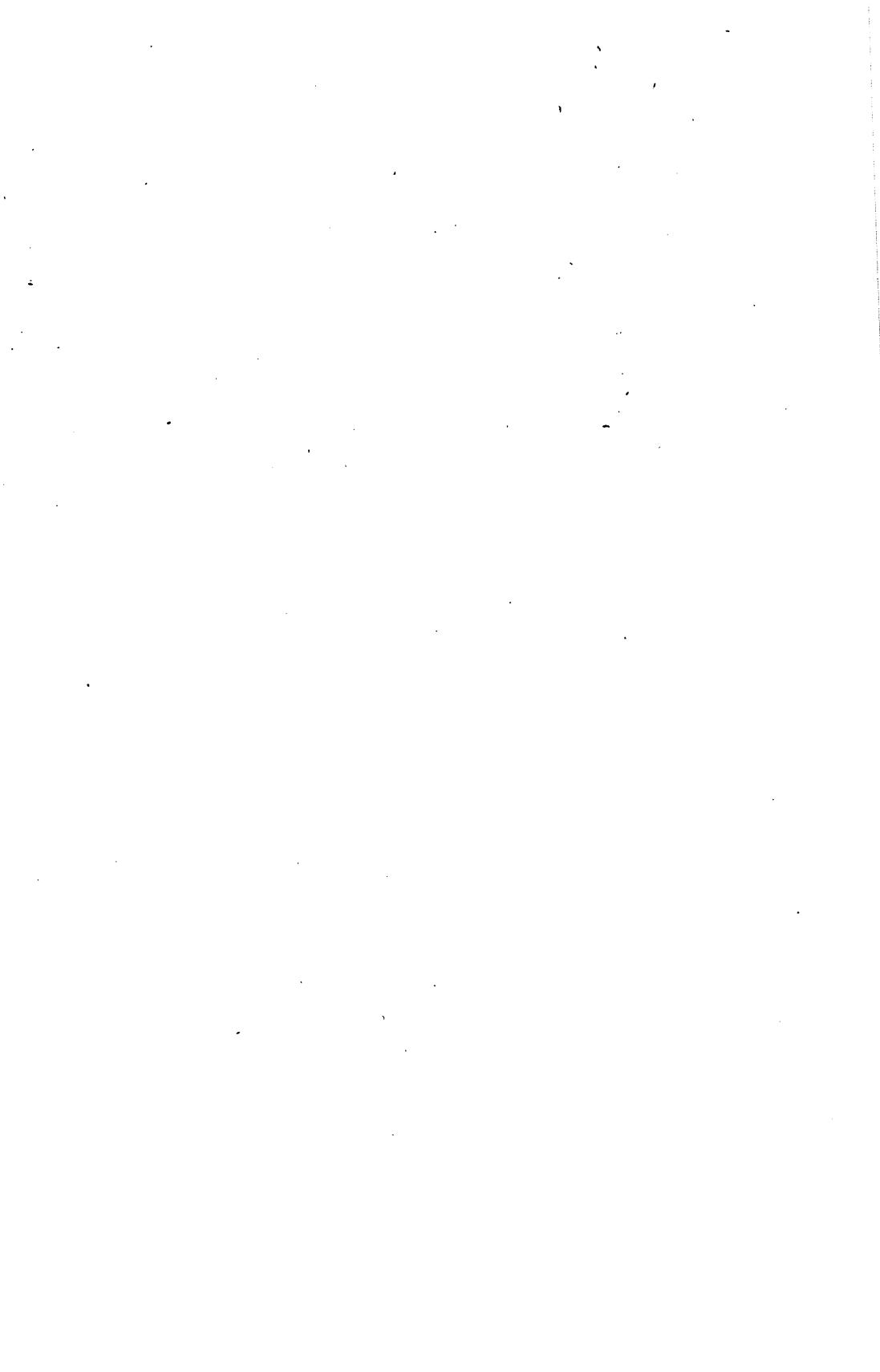
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# TRAINING FOR STORE SERVICE

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# TRAINING FOR STORE SERVICE

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THE VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND TRAINING OF  
JUVENILE EMPLOYEES OF RETAIL DEPARTMENT,  
DRY GOODS AND CLOTHING STORES IN BOSTON

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*Report of Investigations made in the Research  
Department of the Women's Educational  
and Industrial Union*

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LUCILE EAVES  
*Director*



BOSTON  
RICHARD G. BADGER  
THE GORHAM PRESS

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## PREFACE

Many persons have co-operated in supplying the data embodied in this report. The investigators of the Research Department of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union have been in close touch with the work of the pioneer school for the training of store employees which was founded in 1905 and maintained as a part of the activities of the Union until September, 1918.<sup>1</sup> We are indebted to Mrs. Lucinda W. Prince, the Director, and Miss Helen Rich Norton, formerly Associate Director, for opportunities to observe the activities of the school. We have profited, also, by the assistance of experienced and gifted directors of the education departments of Boston stores; special mention should be made of our obligations to Miss Bernice M. Cannon, of William Filene's Sons Company, Miss Mary Hopkins of the Jordan Marsh Company and Miss Helen R. Norton of the R. H. White Company, each of whom has given generously of her time for the discussion of aspects of our report or the reading of the manuscript. Employment managers and other store officials have been patient and kindly in assisting our investigators to locate the information buried in their files. Miss Susan J. Ginn, Director of the Vocational Guidance Bureau of the Boston Public Schools, and the members of her staff, have placed their excellent employment records at our disposal and assisted in their interpretation.

Free use has been made of data collected and tabulated by my fellow-workers in the Research Department, and the manu-

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<sup>1</sup>The class for training women employed in stores was organized first for the purpose of assisting women employed in stores to earn more by learning how to give better services. Recognition of the value of such training led to a demand for teachers which was met by the organization of a teacher training class in 1909. Since 1911 Simmons College has co-operated in these teacher training activities, and has granted certificates to those who completed the course. The rapid development made necessary larger facilities than could be supplied by the parent society, so the work was reorganized in 1918 and moved to new quarters located in the heart of the retail district. The present "Prince School of Education for Store Service" is supported by Simmons College, and by contributions from Boston merchants and from the National Retail Dry Goods Association. Mrs. Lucinda W. Prince, who was in charge of the earlier classes at the Union, is the Director.

scripts embodying the results of their investigations have greatly assisted me in the organization and condensation of the material presented in this report. The first of our series of studies was made in 1916-1917 by Miss Christine M. Ayars, who collected and tabulated the data dealing with the store experiences of 21-year-old employees, and procured many payroll and employment records. In the fall of 1917, Miss Elizabeth Greene made a careful study of the shifting or changes in positions of Juvenile store workers, which was based partly on material collected by Miss Ayars and partly on information obtained by supplementary field work. The tabulation of the sample group of a thousand records of 14 to 21 year old store employees was done in the fall of 1918 by Misses Elizabeth Porter, Melba Martin and Bertha Hills. Miss Hills also prepared an excellent discussion of the wages of juvenile store workers, but this has not been printed in the final report as the changes in wages have been so great that the data are no longer of sufficient value to justify publication. In acknowledging the services of my assistants in the Research Department, special mention should be made of the painstaking labors of our secretary, Miss Caroline E. Heermann, who has copied our manuscripts and verified our tables.

LUCILE EAVES

Director of the Research Department  
Women's Educational and Industrial Union.

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGES
I. STORES AS PLACES OF EMPLOYMENT.....	9
Introduction—Proportion of Juveniles employed in Stores—Statistics of Store Workers—Opportunities for Adults in Retail Selling—Young Women Employed in Boston Stores—Types of Stores Employing Boston Young Persons—Differences between Stores Selling Food and Clothing—Increased Sale of Ready-Made Clothing—Smaller Stores Less Important Fields for Vocational Education—Importance of Retail Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores for Urban Vocational Education Programs—Great Stores as Educational Centers—Cultural Value of Training for Store Service.	
II. STORE ORGANIZATION.....	19
Introduction—The Small Stores—Organization of the Large Stores—The Central Governing Body—Variations in Groupings of Store Activities—Common Tendencies in Store Organization—Financial Division—Merchandising, Problems of Organization—Organization Policies—Subsidiary Merchandising Departments—Advertising Department—Care and Preparation of Stock—Personal Service—Store Operation or Store System—Departments Belonging Exclusively to the Store Operation Division—Departments whose Functioning Relates them Closely to the Store Operation Division—Personnel Division—Work of the Personnel Division—Opportunities for Promotion Revealed by Organization Plans—Promotion Assisted by Employment and Educational Departments.	
III. PERSONAL AND EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF JUVENILE STORE EMPLOYEES .....	32
Introduction—Sex Distribution—Social Status of Store Workers—Overcoming Prejudices Against Store Work—Courtesy of Store Officials a Source of Prejudice—Higher Types of Workers Attracted by Newer Store Policies—Educational Qualifications of Juvenile Store Employees—Variations between Stores in Educational Qualifications—Why Cloth-	

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGES
ing Stores Demand More Education—Variations in Educational Requirements with Size of Stores and Quality of Goods—Personal Traits Commended by Store Officials—Personal Traits which Annoy Store Officials—Ill Health—The Department Scrapper, Disagreements with Customers—Personal Appearance Desired in Store Employees—Physical Characteristics Desired for Store Executives—Varied Talents May be Utilized in Stores.	43
<b>IV. OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF YOUNG PERSONS EMPLOYED IN BOSTON RETAIL DEPARTMENT, DRY GOODS AND CLOTHING STORES, AND THE QUALIFICATIONS DESIRED IN PERSONS ENGAGED IN THE CHIEF STORE OCCUPATIONS .....</b>	43
Introduction— <i>Selling</i> —Extent of Juvenile Employment—Sexes, Ages and Education of Juvenile Salespeople—Preference for Attractive Young Women—Comments Showing Qualifications Desired—A Saleswoman with a Bright Future— <i>Clerical Occupations of Juvenile Employees of Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores</i> —Numbers Employed in Clerical Occupations—Sexes, Ages and Education of Juvenile Clericals—Characteristics of Successful Clericals Shown in Reports of Their Superior Officers—A Typical Office Stenographer—A Merchandise Clerical Who is Forging Ahead—A Plodding Merchandise Clerical—Floor Clericals—Summary— <i>Care of Stock</i> —Duties of Stock Workers—Receiving Clerks—Stampers and Markers—Stock Rooms—Stock Workers of Selling Departments—Ages and Schooling of Stock Workers Similar to Those of Salespeople—Comments on Stock Workers—Unsatisfactory Stock Workers—A High Class Stock Marker—Summary— <i>Rapid Changes in Numbers Employed in Minor Juvenile Store Occupations</i> — <i>Distribution and Qualifications of Juvenile Employees in Minor Store Occupations</i> —Bundlers—Floor, Errand, Cash, Teller—Cashiers, Inspectors, Examiners, Checkers—Decentralizing the Cash System—Characteristics of Inspectors, Examiners, or Checkers—Age and Schooling of Cashiers—Comments of Store Officials on Examiners and Cashiers,	

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGES
<p>—Qualifications Desired—Undesirable Employees          —Satisfactory Cashiers—A Cashier with a Bright Future—Delivery—Chances of Promotion in the Delivery Department—<i>Comments Showing Qualifications Desired for Various Miscellaneous Positions</i>          —<i>Employees of Restaurants and Manufacturing Departments.</i></p>	65
<p><b>V. SHIFTING OF YOUNG STORE WORKERS.....</b></p> <p>Introduction—Sources of Information—The Amount of Shifting—Variations between the Sexes in the Amount of Shifting—Characteristics of Extreme Shifters—Other Occupations of Young Store Workers—Shifting Due to Seasonal Variations in the Opportunities for Employment in Stores—Extra or Special Store Workers—Months of Issuance of Certificates Authorizing Store Work—Shifting from Factories and Other Stores in Busy Seasons—Reasons for Shifting—Educational Significance of Shifting.</p>	82
<p><b>VI. TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT IN RETAIL STORES .....</b></p> <p>Introduction—<i>Training in Elementary Schools</i>—Social Relations—Physical Development—Refocusing of Elementary Branches—Local Geography—Economic History—Arithmetic—Penmanship—<i>Courses of Training for Store Service in Continuation and Secondary Schools</i>—Continuation School Courses—Content of Continuation School Courses for Store Employees of 14 to 16 Years Old—Training for Store Service Given in Secondary Schools—Secondary Education Desirable for Store Employees—<i>Obtaining Store Experience</i>—Details of Co-operation—Failure to Enter Store Service After Receiving Training—<i>General Educational Value of Training in Salesmanship</i>—<i>Need of Standardization of Wages of Adolescents</i>—Content of Secondary Courses in Retail Selling—Lack of Standardization—Universal Store Activities—Standardization of Local Store Practices—<i>Training in Salesmanship</i>—Importance of Vocational Education—Two Parts of Training in Salesmanship—Knowledge of Merchandise Gained in Secondary School Courses—Class Reports on Merchandise—Meeting Customers—Train-</p>	82

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGES
ing Given Regular Employees—New or Juvenile Employees—Reducing the Cost of New Employees—Insuring a Cordial Reception of the New Employee—Training for Special Services—Training of the Regular Sales Force—Knowledge of the Stock—Care of Merchandise—Service to Customers— <i>Training of Buyers</i> —Knowledge of the Stock—The Buyer and His Markets—Marking the Stock—The Successful Buyer— <i>Organizing the Vocational Knowledge of the Store</i> —A Store Advisory Board—Service Clubs or Booster Clubs—Co-operation between Store Education and Employment Departments— <i>Need of Training for Store Executives.</i>	115
<b>APPENDIX I</b>	
<b>STATISTICAL DATA SHOWING CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT OF JUVENILE STORE WORKERS IN BOSTON.....</b>	115
<i>Educational Certificates of Boston Young Persons 16 to 21 Years of Age—War-Time Re-distribution of Juvenile Labor—Sample Group of 21-Year-Old Workers Used in this Study—Classification of the Sample Group by Businesses of the Employing Firm—Uses Made of Table Showing Distribution of Sample Group—Employment Certificates Issued to Minors 14 to 16 Years of Age—Tables Showing Occupational Distribution of Juvenile Store Employees, and the Age and Educational Qualifications of Those Employed in Different Occupations and Types of Stores—Care of Health of Employees in Retail Stores—Plans for Teaching the Care of Stock—Preliminary Study of Conditions in a Department—Organization for Care of Stock—Care of Folded House-Dresses, Nurses' and Maids' Uniforms—In the Morning—Care of Stock During the Day—Additional agreements on stock care—Duties of the Head of Stock—Care of Hanging Stock, or Machine-Made Dresses of Silks, Serges, or Cottons—Morning Care of Hanging Stock,—Care of Hanging Stock During the Day—Supervision of Care of Hanging Stock—<i>Statistical Tables Showing Experiences of Juvenile Store Workers.</i></i>	115
<b>APPENDIX II</b>	
<b>SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	133
<b>INDEX .....</b>	141

# Training For Store Service

## CHAPTER I

### STORES AS PLACES OF EMPLOYMENT

#### *Introduction*

Experiences and training of young persons employed in Boston department, dry goods and clothing stores when 14 to 21 years old are discussed in this report of the results of a series of investigations made by members of the Research Department of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union. It is hoped that the reading of such a discussion will assist young mercantile workers to see their tasks as parts of the great public service of distribution, that store managers in other cities may profit by the descriptions of progressive policies which are being developed by Boston business men, and that educators will find suggestions which may be embodied in the courses of training for store service which are being introduced in the secondary and continuation schools of many cities.

Retail stores are focusing points of the activities which supply human wants; products of farms, factories and mines are gathered on their shelves, and men and women come to their counters to supply themselves with the necessities, comforts or luxuries of daily living. Workers in a retail store are engaged in the great game of enlisting all the ingenuity which the race has developed for the purpose of supplying any human needs which customers present. This service of collecting available commodities and distributing them to meet public demands furnishes employment to a larger number of the inhabitants of great cities than any other single occupation. Not only those who earn a living by service in stores but all persons interested in the business life of cities should know more about the activities of the mercantile establishments where

goods necessary for human comfort or enjoyment are distributed to their ultimate consumers.

#### *Proportion of Juveniles Employed in Stores*

Between one-fourth and one-third of the wage-earning minors of Boston serve in stores at some time during the period between leaving school and reaching adult years. One-fourth of the certificates obtained shortly before their twenty-first birthdays by a sample group of 6,385 young persons authorized employment in stores, and about one-third of the 1917 graduates of 8 Boston high schools were found employed in stores after graduation.<sup>1</sup> There has been a decrease in the number of children 14 to 16 years old who are employed in stores, as their work certificates which specify occupations authorized store positions for 36 per cent of the children in 1913 and for only 15 per cent in 1918. At the same time the number who entered factories increased from 47 to 66 per cent.

#### *Statistics of Store Workers*

The extent of juvenile employment in stores is shown also by statistics which give the ages of workers engaged in store occupations. Nearly one-fourth of the clerks in stores and salespeople reported for Boston in the Federal Census of 1910 were under 21 years of age.<sup>2</sup> The proportion of young persons is even greater in the large department and dry goods stores which help make Boston the great center where all New England comes to shop. In 1914 it was found by a study of women employed in these stores that 44 per cent of the regular and 45 per cent of the extra workers were under 21 years of age, and that 90 per cent were unmarried members of family

<sup>1</sup>These schools give general cultural courses and also offer instruction in salesmanship and commercial subjects. Of the boys for whom the Boston Vocational Guidance Bureau obtained reports, 132 or 29 per cent found work in stores, while of the 213 girl graduates 37 per cent took mercantile positions. Graduates of the Commercial High School, the Mechanics Arts High School and the Trade Schools were not included in this summary.

<sup>2</sup>The figures were as follows: Total clerks in stores and salespeople, 24,498; number under 21 years of age, total 5,573; males 3,092; females 2,481; percentage under twenty-one, 22.7; male and female retail dealers under twenty-one, 492. Thirteenth Census of the United States, IV, 539-540.

groups.<sup>3</sup> A Minimum Wage Commission investigation which included women working in stores throughout Massachusetts found a somewhat lower proportion of younger workers, or 36 per cent under 21 years of age.<sup>4</sup>

### *Opportunities for Adults in Retail Selling*

In Boston, as in many other large cities, retail selling is the most important occupation of adult men.<sup>5</sup> This is true both because of the large number engaged and because of the exceptional opportunities which it affords for independent business careers. In 1910 there were almost as many retail dealers as clerks and salesmen in the groups of adult men engaged in retail selling. The proportion of women who were independent dealers was not so great, but it is fair to assume that the number might have been increased by married women who assisted their husbands in small stores. It is true also that the training which fits young women for intelligent services in retail stores will be useful in adult years when many of them may assume responsibility for spending family incomes.

### *Young Women Employed in Boston Stores*

Retail selling positions were being filled largely by young women even before war-time pressure forced the men to seek more strenuous vocations. This tendency towards an excess in females is particularly marked in the larger stores; in our sample group of 21-year-old young persons, 70 per cent of those employed in grocery stores and 64 per cent of the young persons certificated to the miscellaneous group of smaller stores were men, while the proportions of the sexes were reversed in the large, centrally-located department, dry goods

<sup>3</sup>Unemployment Among Women in Department and Other Retail Stores of Boston, Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Whole Number 182, Women in Industry, No. 8, pp. 33, 52.

<sup>4</sup>Second Annual Report of the Minimum Wage Commission of Massachusetts for the year ending December 31, 1914, p. 127.

<sup>5</sup>The chief occupations of males 21 years old and over, in the order of their numerical importance were: retail dealers, 10,700; salesmen in stores, 9,932; clerks (except clerks in stores), 8,655; draymen and teamsters, 6,447; carpenters, 6,442; machinists, 5,508. The leading occupations of females over 21 years of age were: servants, 14,913; dressmakers and seamstresses (not in factories), 5,939; saleswomen in stores, 4,532; bookkeepers, cashiers and accountants, 4,236; stenographers and typewriters, 3,753; teachers, 3,305; boarding and lodging house keepers, 3,111; sewing machine operatives and seamstresses (in factories), 2,707.

and clothing stores, as 70 per cent of the young persons certificated to department and dry goods stores and 65 per cent of those whose last educational certificates authorized employment in clothing stores were females. There was a decrease in the number of women employed in these stores after the enforcement of the minimum wage in January, 1916.<sup>6</sup> This was due to the dropping of the less intelligent and efficient rather than to the refusal to employ more women, as the records already cited of positions taken by the high school graduates of 1917 show 37 per cent of the females and 29 per cent of the males entering mercantile establishments.

#### *Types of Stores Employing Boston Young Persons*

Young persons working in stores are engaged chiefly in tasks connected with the distribution of goods used to supply the primitive human needs of food, clothing and shelter. While food is the most fundamental of these requirements, the sale of clothing offers the city dweller greater opportunities for employment. The food supply of the home is usually in need of daily renewal, and the perishable character of a large portion of such goods makes necessary prompt and careful delivery. On the other hand, clothing is purchased at certain seasons, and is easily packed and shipped to distant customers, hence dry goods and clothing stores serve a much larger territory. The woman who always orders the family groceries from the small, neighborhood store, is willing to devote an occasional day to a trip to town for the purpose of seeking the greater opportunities for choice or the slightly better prices of the centrally located department, dry goods and clothing stores.

#### *Differences Between Stores Selling Food and Clothing*

Differences in the character and location of stores selling food and clothing is shown by the distribution of a sample

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<sup>6</sup>In department, dry goods and specialty stores, the number of women and girls employed as full-time workers in 1916 was 4.6 per cent less than in 1915, and 10.7 per cent less than in 1914, but the total amount paid in wages to regular female employees in 1916 exceeded that recorded for either of the previous years. Preliminary Report on the Effect of the Minimum Wage in Massachusetts Retail Stores, Bulletin No. 12, Minimum Wage Commission, November, 1916, p. 6.

group of young persons whose employment certificates indicate that they held store positions when 19 to 21 years old.<sup>7</sup> Thirty-eight per cent of the firms selling food, and but 16 per cent of the firms dealing in dry goods and clothing, were located in the suburbs. The many small, scattering, food-selling establishments employed an average of 2 young persons of this restricted age group per firm, while the 34 centrally located department and dry goods stores averaged 19 per firm from our sample group of young persons. Since there are many small specialty shops dealing in ready-made clothing, the average number of young persons per store was only 4,<sup>8</sup> although there are several clothing establishments which are like the great department stores in size and complexity of organization.

#### *Increased Sale of Ready-Made Clothing*

The remarkable increase in the sale of ready-made clothing is evident in all the tables showing the distribution of store workers. The department and dry goods stores give much attention to its sale, and there is, in addition, a group of 30 retail and 14 wholesale stores which devote their entire energies to supplying the public with ready-to-wear clothing. Only one of the department stores has more employees than the largest of these clothing stores, and the total number of employees of the clothing group is greater than that of the dry goods firms. Moreover, the grade of employees of the clothing stores averages higher, and there is less irregularity in their employment, as the percentage of variation between

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<sup>7</sup>An explanation of the certificates which Massachusetts laws require for working minors will be found in Appendix I.

<sup>8</sup>These averages refer to stores to which young persons of our 21-year-old sample group had been certificated. The distribution of the sample group of young persons who served in stores when 19 to 21 years old is shown in Table I.

## TRAINING FOR STORE SERVICE

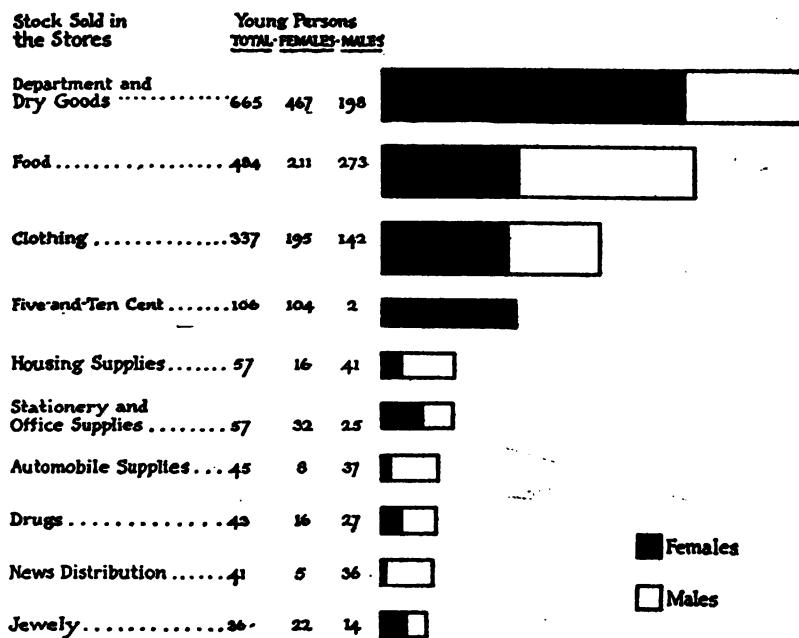
TABLE I. DISTRIBUTION OF A SAMPLE GROUP OF YOUNG PERSONS EMPLOYED BY BOSTON SELLING FIRMS

Types of Employing Stores	Total Number of						Located in Boston			Located in Suburbs		
	Young Persons			Females			City No.	No. of Young	No. of Young	No. of Young	No. of Young	No. of Young
	Firms	Sons	Males	Firms	Males	Females						
Total, . . . . .	554 <sup>a</sup>	1951	842	1109	399	1624	155	327	327	327	327	327
<i>Stores, selling General Stocks, . . .</i>	49	771	200	571	28	678	21	93				
Department and dry goods, . . . . .	34	665	198	467	21	616	13	49				
5-and-10 cent, . . . . .	15	106	2	104	7	82	8	44				
<i>Stores, Selling Clothing, . . . . .</i>	80	837	142	195	74	824	6	18				
Men's and women's specialty, . . . . .	3	176	60	116	3	176						
Women's specialty, . . . . .	14	43	8	35	14	43						
Men's clothing and furnishings, . . . . .	10	27	19	8	10	27						
General and credit stores, . . . . .	10	19	5	14	8	17	2	2				
Cloaks and suits, . . . . .	4	5	—	5	4	5						
Clothing supplies (wholesale), . . . . .	3	3	3	—	3	3						
Shoes, . . . . .	19	30	18	12	17	28	2	2				
Leather (wholesale), . . . . .	11	25	23	2	9	16	2	9				
Rubber goods, . . . . .	6	9	6	3	6	9	—	—				
<i>Stores, Selling Food, . . . . .</i>	247	484	273	211	152	345	95	139				
Groceries, . . . . .	61	131	93	38	24	79	37	52				
Bakeries and delicatessen, . . . . .	21	87	33	54	7	58	14	29				
Provisions and markets, . . . . .	48	70	49	21	26	42	22	28				
Restaurants and lunch rooms, . . . . .	53	98	46	52	48	93	5	5				
Dairy stores, . . . . .	14	19	13	6	7	8	7	11				
Tea and coffee stores, . . . . .	13	19	7	12	11	17	2	2				
Fruit and nut stores, . . . . .	7	7	4	3	7	7	—	—				
Bakers' and confectioners' supplies, . . . . .	3	10	3	7	1	4	2	6				
Confectionery stores, . . . . .	11	15	5	9	7	11	4	4				
Wines and liquors, . . . . .	5	11	10	1	5	11	—	—				
Prepared foods, . . . . .	2	6	1	5	1	5	1	1				
Cigars and tobacco, . . . . .	9	11	6	3	8	10	1	1				
<i>Housing Supplies, . . . . .</i>	87	57	41	16	33	50	4	7				
Furniture, . . . . .	12	20	13	7	10	17	2	3				
Paints and oils, . . . . .	7	9	8	1	7	9	—	—				
Light fixtures, . . . . .	5	9	6	3	4	8	1	1				
Wall paper and paper goods, . . . . .	5	8	5	2	5	8	—	—				
Plate and ornamental glass, . . . . .	5	6	4	2	5	8	—	—				
Plumbers' supplies, . . . . .	3	5	5	—	2	2	1	3				
<i>Stores Supplying Aesthetic and Intellectual Needs, . . . . .</i>	63	161	98	63	57	132	6	29				
News distributing, . . . . .	8	41	36	5	5	37	3	4				
Jewelry, clocks and watches, . . . . .	17	36	14	22	17	36	—	—				
Library and office supplies, . . . . .	8	31	12	19	6	9	2	22				
Stationery, paper, cards, . . . . .	13	26	13	18	13	26	—	—				
Florists, . . . . .	7	8	7	1	7	8	—	—				
Pianos and musical instruments, . . . . .	4	8	7	1	3	5	1	3				
Book stores, . . . . .	2	6	4	2	2	6	—	—				
Artists' and architects' supplies, . . . . .	4	5	5	—	4	5	—	—				
<i>Miscellaneous, . . . . .</i>	78	141	88	53	55	95	23	46				
Drugs, . . . . .	26	43	27	16	21	37	5	6				
Duplicating machines, . . . . .	5	12	—	12	4	7	1	5				
Typewriters and adding machines, . . . . .	4	12	8	4	2	3	2	9				
Optical goods, . . . . .	4	7	1	6	4	7	—	—				
Autos and auto tires, . . . . .	21	45	37	8	10	23	11	22				
Miscellaneous, not otherwise classified, . . . . .	18	22	15	7	14	18	4	4				

<sup>a</sup>The firms to which young persons had been certificated and which were identified by reference to business directories, but which could not be located because they had moved or gone out of business, have been omitted from this table.

the dull and busy seasons was 36.5 in the dry goods and only 13.2 in the clothing stores.<sup>10</sup>

CHART I  
DISTRIBUTION BY TYPES OF STORES AND SEXES OF A SAMPLE GROUP OF YOUNG PERSONS WHO  
HAD RECEIVED CERTIFICATES AUTHORIZING WORK IN STORES WHEN THEY WERE 19 TO 21 YEARS <sup>1</sup>  
OF AGE



<sup>1</sup> The more important types of stores are presented in this chart. Complete data will be found in Table I.

### *Smaller Stores Less Important Fields for Vocational Education*

The other stores to which members of our sample group were certificated have not received special attention in our vocational education survey because they are less important as places of employment, because their organization makes it difficult to devise special educational programs adapted to their needs, and because the services which they render the public are less essential than those of establishments dealing in food and clothing. The employees of a small store are

<sup>10</sup>That is the number of employees in the dull season was 63.5 of those in the busy season in the dry goods stores, and 86.8 per cent in the clothing stores.

usually under the personal supervision of the owner, or some other responsible person, who gives instruction and relieves them of the necessity of making important decisions. The forms of organization and policies of small retail dealers have not been standardized, so that group instruction of employees from different stores is difficult, but, since the experience in meeting customers and presenting goods differs little from that of the larger establishments, excellent opportunities for apprenticeship employment are found in the miscellaneous group of small stores.

Books and stationery, jewelry and flowers, may be considered as belonging to the class of luxuries which can be spared until more basic needs have been supplied. Some would claim that the larger portion of the druggist's stock is as easily dispensed with, but the fact that local drug stores are found side-by-side with groceries in every community, suggests that many persons consider their needs for drugs and foods equally urgent. Shelter is provided for by agencies other than stores, and so this great public demand was represented in our sample group by the comparatively small number of establishments dealing in household decorations or furnishings. But little opportunity for the employment of young persons is afforded by the wholesale selling firms; only 5 per cent of our sample group certificated to mercantile establishments were found at work with wholesalers.

#### *Importance of Retail Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores for Urban Vocational Education Programs*

Retail department, dry goods and clothing stores offer important fields for vocational education, not merely because they employ large numbers of juvenile and adult workers, but also because such training is necessary for the successful development of their business, and because they afford peculiar facilities for sound educational work which may have personal and social as well as economic value.

From two to four thousand persons are required to handle the business of the largest Boston stores, and the average number per firm employed for each type of store in the busy season was as follows:—department, 1,618; dry goods, 346; cloth-

ing, 187. Such an aggregation of employees points to a Mercantile Revolution comparable to the Industrial Revolution of the past century. It makes possible the division of selling activities into many simple tasks which may be undertaken by juvenile workers. But great stores like great factories must be well organized and carefully supervised in order to secure an efficient and profitable utilization of large groups of youthful and irresponsible employees.

The advantages of division of labor are lost unless greater expertness is attained. Store managers, like factory managers, must standardize their tasks, stabilize their working forces and develop intelligent and devoted heads of departments. Thorough training must compensate for the lessened personal interest which is inevitable when store people are working for hire rather than for the promotion of their own enterprises. Without such educational activities, the great stores may find it difficult to compete with the many small shops where every detail of the business is closely supervised by interested owners.

#### *Great Stores as Educational Centers*

The great stores afford peculiarly good opportunities for the sort of educational activities which are required for their successful development. The large numbers employed make possible well-graded class instruction, and the highly specialized departments are apt to be in charge of persons with much expert knowledge. Under the guidance of a skillful educational director, such a corps of experts may give vocational training of a high order. Effective co-operation between stores and high school classes in salesmanship is easily secured because of the irregularities in the demands for store services. In the course of the present investigation, store officials were asked to state the largest and smallest numbers employed during the previous year. These reports show that 7,781 more employees were required for the busy than for the dull season; in other words, the number of employees in the dull season was 67.5 per cent of those in the busy season.<sup>11</sup> Variations during

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<sup>11</sup>A full discussion of the seasonal variations in the demands for store workers will be found in Chapter V.

the week in the amount of service required are common, so that many stores employ a regular force of part-time extras. This combination of tasks suitable for young persons and numerous demands for extra or part-time workers offers unusual opportunities for co-operation between schools and department, dry goods and clothing stores in the development of sound plans for vocational education. Striking uniformity in seasonal variations is shown in all the reports from stores dealing chiefly in clothing and dry goods, and the busiest periods fall in months of the year when school vacations are customary, so that temporary work in stores need not interfere seriously with the school course. The use of members of the high school salesmanship classes as extra helpers in Boston stores has been found to be advantageous, both because the students profit by the practice under normal business conditions and because the excessive shifting from other positions of young persons who cannot hope for regular employment as store workers is prevented.

#### *Cultural Value of Training for Store Service*

The criticism that vocational education lacks in cultural value is not valid for much of the training needed by store employees. They must learn to cultivate an attractive personal appearance and a quiet and dignified bearing; necessary adjustments must be made to fellow workers so that harmonious and effective group activities will be possible; agreeable manners, skill in meeting all sorts of persons, in discovering and administering intelligently to their needs must be developed. The increased personal dignity, adaptability and social insight which may result from such training is equally valuable in many other walks of life. So too, a knowledge of the sources of supply and varying uses of the many commodities handled in great stores is of value for anyone attempting the development of a comfortable home; and an understanding of the complex organization and differing functions of a great mercantile establishment may assist to a better comprehension of the intricate economic life of a highly developed society and prepare for the more intelligent exercise of the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship in an industrial democracy.

## CHAPTER II

### STORE ORGANIZATION

#### *Introduction*

The numbers employed, the qualifications demanded, the training needed, the regularity of employment and the chances of promotion of young store workers are all dependent in large measure on the forms of organization of their places of employment; yet the bewildering array of more or less personal adjustments found in the Boston stores raises questions as to whether retail selling has reached the stage of development where occupations can be standardized, or where there is a general agreement about the forms of organization suitable for different types of stores. The juvenile workers and their employers interviewed in the course of these investigations were found in establishments which were typical of all stages of development: on the one hand there were the little neighborhood "thread and needle" shops, the suburban dry goods stores which added staple dress goods and paper patterns to this stock, the specialty shops which were little more than the salesrooms for the output of small dressmaking establishments; and on the other there were great stores in which two to four thousand employees were required to handle the varied wares which were spread through great buildings with seven or eight floors above and two floors below the street level.

#### *The Small Stores*

Many of the small stores are family enterprises; the wife runs in from the adjoining living room to "mind" shop while the head of the family is absent buying stock, and the son delivers goods in out-of-school hours. Foreigners frequently start successful American business careers with such enterprises. Stores with five to a hundred employees are apt to continue the autocratic, one-man control characteristic of these early conditions. Their owners or responsible managers de-

cide how the capital shall be invested, engage, train and discharge their "help," and settle all disputed questions. The conditions of work and chances of promotion depend on the personal characters and business abilities of those in charge. On the whole, the tendency to desert such establishments<sup>1</sup> for the larger stores shows a sound judgment of business opportunities, but cases were found where regularity of employment and personal preferences held young persons to long terms of service in the smaller stores.

#### *Organization of the Large Stores*

Characteristic features of the organization of the large stores have been obtained by a comparative study of the organization charts of three of the most highly developed stores of Boston. The recent origin of these charts shows how slowly the great mercantile establishments have come to a realization of the necessity of standardizing their tasks, and perfecting their agencies for supervision and instruction. Persons familiar with the stores claim that some sections of these charts represent first steps in the efforts to develop a sound store system rather than reports of actual conditions. While there is confusion and lack of agreement in the grouping of departments, the range of occupations and their relative importance are clearly shown. The charts are helpful also in estimating the agencies required for supervising and instructing store employees, and the chances for promotion open to juvenile workers.

#### *The Central Governing Body*

The central governing body in each of the stores is a group of managers or board of directors,<sup>2</sup> one of whom is recognized as the general manager, president or chairman. The largest store has three firm members on this board; and in one of the other two stores the five members of this managing board are responsible to a group of representatives of stockholders, and in the other to a board composed of eleven directors chosen

<sup>1</sup>See p. 69 in Chapter V.

<sup>2</sup>The terms are sometimes used as though they were interchangeable. Technically, the directors who are the agents of the corporation have a different legal status from the managers who are executive officers of the store.

by the common stockholders, four of whom are selected from six representatives nominated by the co-operative society of store employees.

### *Variations in Groupings of Store Activities*

Many variations are found in the groupings of store activities assigned to the supervision of different members of the central body, though each store is provided with all the services rendered by the differently distributed store employees. Thus the educational director serves under the supervision of the sales manager in one store and in the department of store personnel in both the others; the publicity department is separately organized in one case, and is a section in the sales division or division of merchandise management and administration in the others; in one store there is a merchandising department responsible for buying which is quite distinct from the sales service, while in the others there is closer co-operation between the selling and buying services. The departments of one store are apportioned to the five members of the board of managers as follows: (1) Financial or comptroller, (2) Organization, (3) Sales management, (4) Merchandise, (5) Basement store. In another all activities connected with the organization, training and supervision of the force of store workers are in charge of a "Director" who is assisted by an "Operating Committee" and a "Personnel and Store Manager;" another department with sections for the main and basement stores provides merchandise, and the financial and publicity activities are separately organized. In addition there is the co-operative association of the employees which is responsible for varied welfare activities and some phases of store administration. Confusion in interpreting one chart results from the fact that responsibility for establishing the relations of a department to the store organization or system may belong to one director while another supervises its actual operation.

A complete reorganization under expert supervision has taken place recently in the third and largest store, in which it is necessary to provide supervision and training for a force of over 3,000 employees. The store activities are divided into

two main groups: one, which is designated "merchandise management and administration," deals with the purchase, manufacture, advertising and sale of merchandise, while the maintenance of the store organization and personnel, the up-keep and operation of the store plant, the administration of the financial and other offices are assigned to the "non-merchandise" division. The store has a "Methods Director" who studies continually the complex organization problems which arise in its numerous departments.

#### *Common Tendencies in Store Organization*

While the lack of standardization which is characteristic of this stage of development in the organization of large mercantile establishments is evident both in the charts of the three large stores and in reports of conditions in other Boston stores, it is possible to discover common tendencies which justify a prediction of the forms of organization and the types of expert supervision which may prevail in the future.

#### *Financial Division*

There is a general agreement on the necessity for a financial division in charge of an expert comptroller or auditor. Since the survival of the business depends on securing an efficient administration of the interests cared for, it is not surprising that this department received early recognition. When stores emerge from the stage where they are family enterprises, the first trained assistant employed is usually a bookkeeper, and similar expert services are necessary at every stage of the later development of a mercantile business. An exact knowledge of all expenses is necessary in order to fix prices; suitable allowances must be made for profits, interest, and depreciation in stock and plant; available capital must be apportioned to the different branches of the business in accordance with policies determined by those who represent the proprietors or stockholders. In addition to the keeping of records, the making of financial reports, the collection and payment of charge accounts, the apportionment of overhead expenses to different departments and the preparation of payrolls, various other duties are assigned to the financial de-

partment in the organization charts; it fills the statistical schedules, calculates bonuses and payments made in profit-sharing systems, establishes or approves of all accounting plans used in the store, and sometimes takes charge of the general office force and cares for miscellaneous legal or clerical activities.

#### *Merchandising, Problems of Organization*

The three stores whose plans were studied are not agreed about the best method of organizing the store activities which are usually classed under the general term of "merchandising." The services of the two largest groups of store employees, namely, those engaged in selling and those who buy and care for the stock, must be brought into effective co-operation. Three problems confront store managers when they attempt to perfect the organization of these important groups of employees:

(1) The large numbers in the groups make classification and divided supervision desirable; should the division be made along departmental or along functional lines?

(2) Buyers of merchandise must be kept informed about what the public demands or accepts from sellers; what are the best methods of securing close co-operation between the selling and buying branches of the merchandising service?

(3) Various subsidiary groups care for activities necessary to successful merchandising; what relationship should they sustain to the main buying and selling groups?

#### *Organization Policies*

The earlier organization policy is suggested by a recent advertisement of a large clothing store in which customers were urged to avail themselves of the services of 63 specialty shops housed under one roof. The less developed stores are loose confederations of departments whose heads retain many of the powers of the owners or managers of small stores. They not only "hire and fire" their assistants and train new workers but also act as buyers for their departments, and, if time remains from these duties, they may serve at the counters. In two of the stores studied, buyers or assistant buyers serve as

heads of the selling departments whose stocks they provide. They are grouped under "merchandisers" who organize the buying activities of the entire store. Although the departments of the basements duplicate those of the main stores, their merchandise is provided by separate groups of buyers who are expert bargain hunters.

The third store, which deals in ready-made clothing, does not maintain so close a relationship between the buying and selling forces. Floor superintendents assume full charge of the salespeople. Although the buyers are released from all responsibility for supervising the selling of their merchandise, they usually have served an apprenticeship at the counter, they continually study the selling qualities of their wares, and frequently assist in the training of the salespeople. The buyers for the main store are grouped under 11 division managers, who in turn are subject to the supervision of the main store merchandise manager and the firm director of merchandise. The buyers for the basement store have over them three division managers and the basement merchandise manager.

#### *Subsidiary Merchandising Departments*

Directors of merchandise also supervise or co-operate with various subsidiary departments which assist in the provision and care of goods and in their sale. The most important of these are the advertising departments, the stockrooms and the manufacturing departments. In addition there are many forms of personal service which are maintained for the convenience of customers. Among other special store activities which may be cared for in the merchandise division are those of the statistical offices, the maintenance of headquarters for buyers in other cities or in foreign countries, shopping bureaus which keep buyers in touch with what is happening in other stores, departments for dealing with returned goods, and agencies for registering complaints and requests for goods not in stock. These latter activities may be cared for by service managers rather than by merchandisers.

#### *Advertising Department*

The need of a specialized department under expert supervision for advertising the merchandise offered for sale is fully

recognized in all the large stores, though there are doubts about its place in the organization scheme. Should it be attached to the buying or selling service, or should it come under the jurisdiction of the director of store operation? There is a strong tendency to give it independent standing as a separate store department. The latest organization chart assigns its "Publicity Department" to the division of "Merchandise Management and Administration." Its activities are classified as follows: advertising division including newspaper, circular and mail order advertising, and records of publicity costs; the division responsible for window and store decoration, and the office which attends to the preparation of merchandise signs. The staff of the director of publicity of another Boston store includes the following persons: publicity manager, chief decorator, chief advertiser, window decorator and assistants, sign shop foreman and assistants, basement store decorator and assistants, musical director and his musicians, advertisers for important lines of goods and their assistants, artists and writers, printing shop foreman and his pressmen and compositors, a man in charge of out-of-town advertising, and numerous office assistants for the various members of the staff.

#### *Care and Preparation of Stock*

The stockrooms offer employment to many young persons as all merchandise must be unpacked carefully, compared with invoices, marked and classified ready for placing on the shelves where it is stored until needed by the salespeople. Department stores produce many commodities, and alteration departments usually are found in the merchandising divisions of stores. A large Boston department store having 18 manufacturing departments has adopted the policy of placing these shops under the general supervision of the merchandisers who direct buyers handling similar goods.

#### *Personal Service*

The many forms of personal service to be obtained in great stores may be regarded as merchandise, although they are supplied usually for the convenience of customers rather than

as means of gaining additional profits. Services of all sorts may be commanded from the manicuring of nails and shampooing of hair, to the buying of theatre tickets, making of Pullman reservations, or even carrying of messages to husbands waiting in automobiles, out of reach of the telephone. It is a common practice to supply an assistant to guide and advise out-of-town shoppers, so that their needs may be supplied in a prompt and satisfactory manner.

#### *Store Operation or Store System*

The difficulties of organizing the varied activities of a great store so that its numerous employees can work together in an effective, harmonious and economical manner are so great that there is a growing tendency to employ a staff of experts responsible for supervising and co-ordinating all the store activities. The divisions under their supervision are variously designated in the organization charts as "organization," "system," "operation," "management," or "service" divisions of the store. This development in mercantile policies is of such recent origin that there is still much confusion about just what should be assigned to these divisions. Sometimes the division of store system serves as a sort of catch-all for store services which, logically, cannot be assigned to other directors. The difficulties of securing a clearly defined organization of this division are increased by the fact that it requires a functional classification which is foreign to ways of thinking resulting from the historical developments of mercantile establishments. Thus when viewed from the standpoint of the goods to be handled, the sales department should be in charge of the supervisor of merchandising, but when consideration is given to the complicated relationships of the groups of employees who render the final services of distribution to customers, it is evident that the supervision of selling belongs in the store system or operation department. Clear thinking and close co-operation are necessary to avoid the irritation and confusion which may result from conflicting orders being given by superior officers responsible for portions of the supervision of the same groups of employees. The depart-

ments classified under the store system or store operation division fall into two groups: (1) Those which belong exclusively in this division; and (2) those whose functioning in the general store activities should be subject to its supervision, but whose constituency is in need of expert direction of another kind.

#### *Departments Belonging Exclusively to the Store Operation Division*

Among the services which belong exclusively to the store operation division are (1) all activities necessary for maintaining the plant in a cleanly, sanitary and efficient condition; (2) the elevator service required by customers and employees; (3) examining, bundling, delivery and porter services; (4) telephone exchanges both within and without the store; (5) store protection by means of detectives, watchmen, and agencies for preventing and extinguishing fires; (6) such minor services as those of the information, lost and found, transfer, adjustment, and time keeping desks or offices. The floor walker, floor manager or floor superintendent usually has duties which entitle him to recognition as a deputy of the director of store operation or store system; it is his business to keep the store activities in his portion of the building running smoothly and to guide customers so that they may readily find the goods or services which the store wishes to sell.

#### *Departments whose Functioning Relates them Closely to the Store Operation Division*

The purpose of the entire organization of a retail store is the sale of its wares, hence all store activities must be focused about those of the salespeople. The co-ordination of store departments for the promotion of their success belongs to the operation division; but the care of their merchandise, the policies about its marking and sale, the qualities and uses which may be presented as selling points, are all matters which demand the expert supervision and knowledge of the merchandise division. The personnel as well as the stock sold may be provided and cared for by other divisions of the store,

although its organization and functioning may be regulated in the store operation or store system division. Devising of plans by which all sections of the store will co-operate in keeping records belongs to the store operation division, while the results of such labors supply the fundamental data on which the business of other departments must be based. Thus the keeping of records by salespeople and cashiers is a part of the store system and at the same time supplies the data used in the financial division. Many employees must assist in carrying out well-organized plans, which will result in the knowledge of the condition of the stock demanded for good work in the merchandising division. The educational departments are listed consistently in the operation division, since they are responsible for familiarizing employees with the entire system of the store and with the duties expected of those holding special positions. Even when it is assumed that they belong in the merchandising division, because the chief functions of educational activities are the promotion of knowledge of the stock and of effective salesmanship, it is recognized that the person charged with training junior employees belongs in the operation or organization division of store administration.

#### *Personnel Division*

Two of the three stores whose organization was studied intensively maintain separate personnel departments. There is a logical consistency in separating many of the activities connected with the employment and education of the store force from those of the store system or operation. Just as the merchandise division provides and cares for commodities subject to the sales activities, so the personnel division provides and trains the working force of the store. As already suggested the distinction drawn is one where a difference is recognized between the functioning of the store organization and the constituency of the working force and of the commodities handled. Parallel distinctions can be made in an industrial plant where the problems of providing raw materials and a labor force differ from those of organizing and supervising the processes of manufacturing.

*Work of the Personnel Division*

A study of the activities listed in the personnel division shows that it renders four important services: (1) It selects and engages new employees. (2) It estimates the vocational abilities and service values of the store staff, so that transfers, promotions, profit sharing awards and bonuses may be distributed intelligently and justly. (3) It conducts educational work adapted to the needs of the store force. (4) It cares for various welfare activities designed to promote the loyalty, contentment and physical well-being of the employees.

*Opportunities for Promotion Revealed by Organization Plans*

The exceptional opportunities for promotion in retail selling establishments are evident from the foregoing summary of the chief features in the organization of three large Boston stores. While, as already suggested, the Mercantile like the Industrial Revolution has been characterized by great establishments and large working forces which make possible division of labor and many tasks suitable for young and inexperienced workers, there are very different ratios between the skilled and unskilled workers of factories and stores. The tasks of factory operatives are more mechanical and require less supervision, since expansion in business results in the multiplication of units of machinery which do similar work. On the other hand, each department of a store has peculiar problems: stocks must be carefully selected and protected from depreciation, and salespeople must learn to present the wares to customers with varied tastes and purchasing capacities. Success under such conditions requires a much larger force of intelligent supervisors than would be necessary in an industrial establishment with a working force equal to that of the stores. A summary of the more responsible and better paid positions found in the three stores whose plans of organization have been described will show the exceptional opportunities for promotion which confront intelligent and ambitious young workers. The selling departments of the three stores number 81, 104 and 192 respectively. Each of these departments requires one to three superior officers; heads of stock<sup>8</sup> or head salespeople care for

<sup>8</sup>Buyers in charge of several small departments supervise the heads of stock and assistant buyers.

very small selling departments; when somewhat larger, assistant buyers are added, and when the departments do a large amount of business both buyers and their assistants are required to provide merchandise. The successful salesperson may look forward to promotion to these positions or may permit a soaring ambition to aim at becoming one of a board of merchandisers who supervise groups of store buyers.

The many subsidiary departments of large stores are in charge of minor officers promoted from the ranks: thus there are chief telephone operators, supervisors of elevator attendants, directors of the delivery service, matrons in charge of cleaners, heads of cashiers, persons who attend to all cash register supervision and instruction, chiefs of the office force, managers of restaurants, stewards, head waiters and numerous other minor officials. In a well managed store, all such positions are filled by the promotion of persons whose experience, loyalty and intelligence fit them to supervise and train workers rendering these varied services.

Store employees of exceptional administrative capacity may look forward to passing from aisle walker or superintendent to floor manager, and then may be director of the main or basement store, and, if exceptionally gifted, may command a salary of \$5,000 to \$50,000 in an important position as director of a store division or general manager. The office worker who has availed himself of opportunities to profit by college courses in statistics, economics and accounting may look forward to filling one of the well-paid positions of expert accountant or statistician which are common in the central offices of great mercantile enterprises. If he is exceptionally gifted he may hope to assume the greater responsibilities of directing the financial division of a store.

#### *Promotion Assisted by Employment and Educational Departments*

The young persons whose vocational interests prompt them to select forms of store service as life careers should seek positions in stores having well-organized employment and educational departments. Otherwise they may find themselves in blind alley jobs without opportunities to perfect themselves in

their calling or assurance that faithful and intelligent services will be recognized and suitably rewarded. The Boston stores whose organizations have been described have definite policies of instruction and promotion which are gradually developing an intelligent and stable working force. In the future exceptionally gifted bundler girls or delivery boys may find an open road to the most responsible and highly paid positions.

### CHAPTER III

## PERSONAL AND EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF JUVENILE STORE EMPLOYEES

### *Introduction*

A thorough knowledge of the personal and educational qualifications of juvenile store workers must precede the development of sound plans for their vocational guidance and training. Caution in presenting general statements of such characteristics is necessary since the activities of a great store make possible the utilization of persons whose talents vary from those of the \$10,000 general manager to the good-natured moron who was found collecting bundles in a wheeled basket which he pushed up and down the store aisles. However, data obtained in the course of this investigation reveal a large measure of uniformity in the main body of young store employees. A general summary of the important personal and educational characteristics of this large group will be followed by a more detailed discussion of variations in the requirements of different store occupations.

### *Sex Distribution*

The division between the sexes of the activities which supply human needs is resulting in an increasing tendency to assume that the distribution of commodities to the persons who will put them to their final uses is primarily an undertaking suitable for women. They do the larger part of the buying and are rapidly developing equally important responsibilities in selling. An even 800<sup>1</sup> of our thousand juvenile store workers were females; this ratio of 4 to 1 held true in each of the three<sup>2</sup> types of stores studied. While women predominate in the

<sup>1</sup>Our cases were taken in the order in which they were filed in the records of the Boston Vocational Guidance Bureau and in schedules collected in a previous investigation of the Research Department. By chance the result was this exact division in a ratio of 4 to 1 between the sexes.

<sup>2</sup>Proportion of females was as follows: department stores, 79.0; clothing, 80.5; dry goods, 82.7.

central body of store employees, men are chosen for the two extremes as they usually hold the important supervisory positions and also perform the rough, unskilled work.

#### *Social Status of Store Workers*

American reluctance to recognize class distinctions has resulted in a tendency to ignore the difficulties of vocational guidance which result from social prejudices against store work, particularly against service behind the counter. Two typical cases will illustrate a common point of view which prevents many sound vocational adjustments:

An attractive young woman with agreeable manners but no great mental endowment came to the Boston Vocational Guidance Bureau for assistance in finding a position. She had taken the high school salesmanship course and found the practice work agreeable. A position as saleswoman in a large department store was found for her, and reports from her superior officers proved that she was well adapted to the work, but she returned in a few weeks with the demand that she be given another position. Her earlier satisfaction with a job well-adapted to her capacities had been destroyed by a former public school teacher who had met her with the exclamation, "What, you a saleswoman! Why, I should think you would be fitted for something better than this!"

The second case is that of a pretty young woman who had served as a minor cashier in a large department store for six years. The educational director of the store urged that she prepare herself for selling, as no further progress was possible in the position which she held. The girl was ashamed of her vocation and determined to take no work which would bring her before the public. Her request for service in a telephone exchange was granted, but she failed to give satisfaction. Finally, her prejudices against service behind the counter were overcome and she found both pleasure and success in selling a line of goods for which she seemed exceptionally well adapted.

#### *Overcoming Prejudices Against Store Work*

A social stigma is an intangible but powerful influence, as it arouses a deep-seated, instinctive desire to avoid the loss

of the respect of associates. It will require years of vocational and educational readjustment to overcome completely the prejudices against store service. Two new tendencies in store administration are hastening this development in Boston:

(1) There has been a lessening of the humiliation due to compulsory association with fellow workers of low personal standards. The store giving the greatest attention to problems of organization and training refuses to employ anyone who has less than a secondary school education, and such an example is sure to influence the standards of other employers. Co-operation with the salesmanship classes conducted by the public high schools and by Simmons College<sup>2</sup> has brought many student workers into the stores. No doubt their presence has assisted in raising social standards and reassuring regular workers who are learning greater respect for their calling.

(2) Education for store employment is the strongest force for overcoming social prejudices, as it is assisting both the public and the employees to regard such work as a skilled trade or even as a profession. The introduction of training and research in salesmanship in several colleges will do much to justify claims for the latter standing. The activities of the educational departments of the large Boston stores do not end with the promotion of this finer attitude towards the job, but devote much attention to improving social relations and to securing opportunities for advancement for all ambitious members of the store force, thus the social outlook of the store employees is improved and respect for persons in less skilled store occupations is promoted by the realization that they may be on the way to positions of greater importance.

#### *Discourtesy of Store Officials a Source of Prejudice*

The older types of floor superintendents and buyers, accustomed to dealing with a class of women who do not resent rude manners, sometimes keep alive the prejudices against

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<sup>2</sup>Originally this school for store workers was conducted by the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, with Mrs. Lucinda W. Prince serving as Director. Recently it has been organized under the title of Prince School of Education for Store Service.

service in stores. Women of refinement will not accept employment which subjects them to rough treatment. The feeling of high school girls that their social standing is better in offices is explained by the superior associates and more courteous supervision commonly found in office positions. The Boston Vocational Guidance officials report cases where high school graduates have abandoned store work because of the offensive manners of their superior officers. Gossip about such experiences spreads rapidly among groups of young persons and a few unpleasant incidents may assist in keeping alive and justifying the feeling that service in stores is suitable only for persons with low social standards.

#### *Higher Types of Workers Attracted by Newer Store Policies*

The activities of personnel directors, employment managers, educational directors and welfare secretaries create a demand for and also make possible the retaining in store service of a much higher type of worker than has been common in the past. The policy of filling important positions by the promotion of faithful and ambitious subordinates leads to greater care in the selection of these understudies of store executives. The thorough training given in store classes overcomes defects of early education and stimulates efforts at self-improvement. Attractive recreational opportunities supplied by the co-operation of store officials and organizations of employees leave no opportunities for a consciousness of social ostracism.

National and local organizations of retail merchants are availing themselves of the opportunities afforded by the Smith-Hughes Act to enlist Federal and State support for the teaching of store occupations in secondary and continuation school classes.\* No doubt in other cities as in New York it will be found necessary to conduct systematic educational campaigns in order to induce the better types of young persons to enter these classes. This could be done by sending to the schools speakers who could present in an attractive way the

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\*The Federal Board for Vocational Education maintains a field agent who is increasing rapidly the number of cities offering such training. She reported recently 16 cities where efforts were being made to promote education for store service.

opportunities in store service for promotion to responsible and well-paid positions. Appeals should be made also to more unselfish motives by helping the young people to realize that retail stores render important services to the community. With the growth of vocational guidance activities, such opportunities to present their claims will be open to all employers, so that we may look for wholesome competition in the effort to enlist the most gifted young people of the community.

#### *Educational Qualifications of Juvenile Store Employees*

Only 50 out of one thousand 18 to 21 year old illiterates\* certificated at the Boston office had been promised positions in stores, and but 9 per cent of the thousand juvenile store employees 14 to 21 years old had failed to reach the eighth grade of the elementary schools. Three out of five of the latter group of young store workers had received secondary school training and two out of five had spent more than two years in secondary schools. It is evident that mercantile establishments have but few positions suitable for persons who have received a limited education.

Yet a surprisingly small proportion of the young persons who entered the stores handicapped by a defective education made use of opportunities to obtain additional schooling. Only 95 of the thousand 14 to 21 year old group reported courses in business colleges or evening schools. Seven girls and 2 boys had taken work in elementary evening schools; 68 others attended secondary classes in night schools; 1 girl and 3 boys had taken evening school work after graduation from high school; 9 girls and 5 boys recorded business-college or trade-school courses.

The larger Boston stores are bringing educational opportunities to their employees. Classes are held during working hours and attendance is a part of the store service. Thus opportunities for improvement are held continually before all employees. In a well-organized store the disposition to profit by such training is stimulated by a knowledge that the better store positions are filled by promotion from the ranks, and

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\*With education less than that required for the completion of the fourth elementary school grade.

by the publicity given in the store newspaper and in meetings of employees. Thus even the less energetic and ambitious young persons who often drift into store positions are stimulated to efforts to become expert salespeople or capable store executives.

#### *Variations between Stores in Educational Qualifications*

Differences between the three types of stores were found in the proportions of the juvenile employees who had received secondary school training; 83 per cent of the juvenile employees of the clothing stores, 60 per cent of those working in department stores, and 40 per cent of those holding positions in dry goods stores had attended secondary schools. These variations were due largely to two factors: (1) Differences in the value of the merchandise handled, and (2) the retaining in some stores of earlier organization plans which made extensive use of juvenile messengers and bundlers. The influence of the latter tendency is evident from the fact that the proportion of the juvenile employees utilized in these "blind alley" occupations in the three types of stores were, clothing 5.2 per cent, department 25.9 per cent and dry goods 41.4 per cent. The sooner the dry goods firms abandon these earlier organization policies the better it will be for their juvenile employees.\*

#### *Why Clothing Stores Demand More Education*

The insistence of the largest clothing store in Boston that new employees must be high school graduates is responsible largely for the fine educational showing of this type of store. It is true also that there is a general tendency to use salespeople of superior intelligence and training in selling ready-made clothing. Higher values are involved in such sales, and skill is required for assisting customers in selecting suitable garments. Only a small portion of the stock is composed of goods which sell themselves, and many kinds of ready-made

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\*The handling and cutting of yard goods is usually entrusted to employees of experience and maturity. Dry goods stores have fewer commodities which can be sold by young employees than are found in the department stores, hence a smaller proportion of their juveniles engage in the better occupations. Tardiness in the development of store organization may be a local or accidental cause of these variations.

clothing are capable of rapid deterioration in commercial value. The larger Boston clothing stores have eliminated the young employees of messenger grade by decentralizing their cash systems, and the smaller ones make little use of juveniles because they employ but few persons who are not engaged in selling.

*Variations in Educational Requirements with Size of Stores and Quality of Goods*

Variations in the educational requirements for juvenile employees with the size of the stores and quality of the goods handled were slight and somewhat inconsistent. The smaller dry goods stores showed better education than the larger and the reverse was true in the clothing and department stores, so these differences probably are due to store policies rather than to inherent differences in the requirements of various types of store service. Obviously, stores seeking the patronage of persons who are willing to pay well for superior grades of goods and intelligent service, must employ salespeople of better education than those endeavoring to attract customers by the cheapness of their wares. The extensive development of basement departments in high-class stores conceals these variations, but when young persons are grouped by places of employment our records of the education of juvenile employees show differences of 10 per cent between the two types of stores in the numbers who had received some secondary education.

*Personal Traits Commended by Store Officials*

The use of psychological tests for measuring ability has not been attempted in Boston stores. Personal judgments of store officials, records of sales and of attendance, and ratings in educational classes are depended upon to guide the personnel or employment managers in recommending promotions or increases of pay. We were permitted the use of a large collection of the confidential reports of store officials telling of the personal characteristics and estimating the value of the services of their subordinates. The general manager of one store warned us of the danger of giving undue weight to these "rule-of-thumb" judgments of store officials. He pointed out

the extent to which such estimates are subject to bias because of temperamental differences, and suggested that circumstances easily might arise which would give the floor superintendent of a department the impression that an exceptionally efficient salesperson had unusual capacity for causing annoying difficulties. Granting the validity of these criticisms, the fact remains that such reports from supervisors have determined the promotion of store employees in the past and are likely to continue to do so for some time to come, so that a knowledge of what the average official commends or condemns is of great practical value for young store workers.

#### *Personal Traits which Annoy Store Officials*

*Ill Health.* Quite naturally store officials are unfavorably impressed by subordinates who cause them extra work or annoyance. Absence because of sickness leaves a selling department short handed or delays important office work. The uniformity with which good health was commended proves it to be one of the first qualifications sought by store officials. Women employees are greatly handicapped by their careless disregard of personal hygiene, as nearly one-third of their absences are due to ill health.<sup>7</sup> The extra work and annoyance caused by their irregularity prevents sympathy with their weakness.

A woman with a record showing much irregularity because of illness cannot hope for promotion to a responsible position. Thus a faithful employee is praised for her tact, for her command of the details of five or six departments, and for her pleasing manner of handling customers; but she has no future because "her lack of physical strength will keep her from making a good floor superintendent."<sup>8</sup>

*The Department Scrapper.* A quarrelsome person cannot hope for a favorable report from the official in charge of her section of the store. Here is the comment on a capable saleswoman with such contentious tendencies: "\_\_\_\_\_ is the de-

<sup>7</sup>Unemployment among Women in Department and Other Retail Stores in Boston, Bul. U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Whole No. 182, p. 20.

<sup>8</sup>The forms of sickness common in Boston stores maintaining clinics are given in Appendix I, Table 5.

partment scrapper! When she is busy, all right, but when the department is slack, looking for trouble! Does not mind her own business! Bad temper!" The expressions, "Easy to get along with," "well-liked by other workers in the office," recur continually in the commendatory reports of store employees. But ability to win the active affection of fellow workers is not indispensable for success, as both the man whom everyone liked and the woman who had no close friends were recommended as potential executives.

*Disagreements with Customers.* Disputes with customers cause losses to the store and annoyance to its officials. Instruction books of Boston stores forbid all arguments between customers and salespeople, and direct that floor superintendents be called promptly to settle disagreements. The frequent need of such assistance reflects on the ability of the store employee, and results in reports of "lack of tact," "rubs customers the wrong way," "irritating manners."

#### *Personal Appearance Desired in Store Employees*

The instruction books of the large Boston stores prescribe the costumes required of all employees who come in contact with customers. From November to April the women are expected to wear dark blue or black dresses; but during the summer they may wear white blouses with dark skirts. Some stores request women employees to avoid transparent blouses, and practically all forbid gum chewing and eating during business hours. Men employees are warned against wearing conspicuous clothing and are urged to give scrupulous care to the cleanliness of their linen and the shine on their shoes.

These instructions reflect the psychological effect sought by the managers of well-organized, mercantile establishments. They wish to create a smoothly-running, harmonious whole, and desire employees who have a well developed social point of view which will make it possible for them to merge their personalities in a co-operative service of the public. There are sound sociological reasons for urging that all business women should cultivate a pleasing but not particularly striking personal appearance. Such regulations as have been quoted are justifiable since fastidious customers should not be offend-

ed by the lack of neatness or cleanliness of store employees with whom they must deal. A conspicuous or eccentric appearance in members of its personnel destroys the harmonious effect of the store service, and tends to focus attention on the salespeople rather than on the goods which the store wishes sold. Boisterous manners and loud talking are forbidden for the same reasons. Such regulations should be acceptable to store employees, since they merely enforce the standards of personal appearance and conduct which are generally adopted by well-bred persons.

#### *Physical Characteristics Desired for Store Executives*

The reports of store officials indicate that a frail or insignificant looking physique is a handicap which would bar a person from promotion to most of the important supervisory positions. The claim that "a person whose physique leads customers to an instinctive recognition of leadership should be selected for the head of a department" has a superficial validity. However, reports on persons recommended as potential executives show occasional, instinctive recognition of the subtler personal forces which confer the right of leadership, as, for example, the comments on the exceptional success of the daughter of a university professor who enlisted in store service: "She looks frail and dresses sensibly and plainly, but has a pleasing personality and gracious manners. Customers seem to pick her out as an authority and come directly to her. She has possibilities as a floor superintendent."

That capacity for leadership was recognized to be a matter of personal character rather than of a college education or intellectual attainments is evident from the comments on another college graduate: "Bright young woman of educated family \* \* \* Plenty of brains but not much common sense. Executive ability absolutely lacking. Memory of details very poor. Not good on present job (clerical). Might do better selling. Has not enough common sense for any executive position. Rather the 'spoiled child' type. Very conscientious and studiously agreeable, but essentially weak. \* \* \* Has mastery of several foreign languages. Is a good deal of a student, but lacks commercial and business instinct."

*Varied Talents May be Utilized in Stores*

While the main body of store employees must possess the characteristics which will enable them to deal successfully with people, the complexity and variety of the activities of a great store make it possible for an ingenious educational director to find suitable employment for persons of varied talents. Good health, intelligence, industry, eagerness to be of service and ability to work harmoniously with associates are the personal qualifications sought by officials in charge of many forms of store service.\* Such traits are common characteristics of desirable workers in both mercantile and industrial establishments, but more specialized qualifications are necessary for exceptional success in particular store occupations. These will be discussed in the following chapter dealing with the occupational distribution of juvenile store employees.

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\*The policy adopted in the employment department of the \_\_\_\_\_ department store is an example of a systematic effort to base promotion on the development of desirable personal characteristics. A printed slip is sent to each division superintendent who rates each employee on five points: personal appearance, courtesy, industry and general estimate. In case of an unfavorable report from a division superintendent the salesperson is interviewed. The employment department considers a request for deserved promotion a slap in the face. Salary inspections and promotions take place twice a year.

Elaborate "Personnel Cards" are kept in another store. These show regularity of attendance, sales records, changes of salary and errors or exceptionally good services. See *Women's Wear*, April 1, 1920, p. 20.

## CHAPTER IV

### OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF YOUNG PERSONS EMPLOYED IN BOSTON RETAIL DEPARTMENT, DRY GOODS AND CLOTHING STORES, AND THE QUALIFICATIONS DESIRED IN PERSONS ENGAGED IN THE CHIEF STORE OCCUPATIONS

#### *Introduction*

There are but few forms of store service in which young persons cannot be utilized, but the variations in the numbers employed in different occupations are great, since they are influenced not only by the nature of the services rendered but also by the types of stores, the wares sold, and the sexes, ages and education of the young workers. The chief store activities in which juveniles are employed and their relative importance are shown in the accompanying graph, which gives the distribution in the eight most important occupations of young persons in a group of one thousand 14-to-21-year-old store employees.

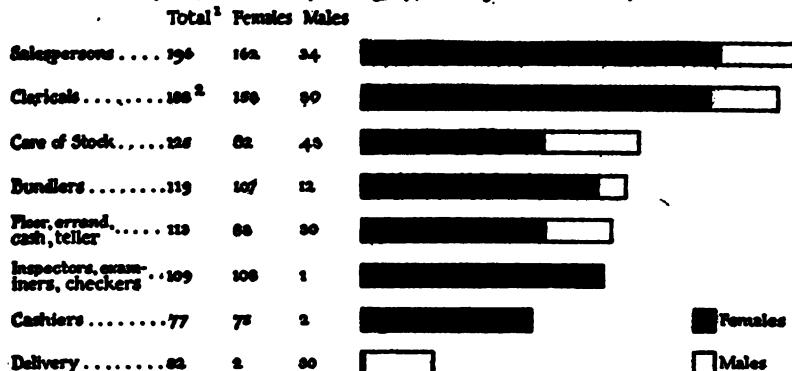
It is generally assumed that education for store positions should deal chiefly with training in salesmanship. While this is the most important store occupation both because of the number employed and because of the opportunities for promotion, it is well to note that only 20 per cent of the thousand young persons of the sample studied were engaged in selling. Present vocational education plans include also training for clerical work, but here again we find that only 20 per cent of the juvenile store employees served as clericals.<sup>1</sup> A little less than 40 per cent of the young store workers were engaged in the two most important occupations; the remaining 60 per

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<sup>1</sup>The occupations included in the clerical group are clericals, 15.4; bookkeepers, 1.1; auditors, 1.9; receiving clerks, .4; total 18.8 per cent. Bookers in the delivery department, .7, and markers in the stockrooms, 1.5, do clerical work and other miscellaneous duties. Salespeople constitute 19.6 per cent of the 1,000 juveniles.

## TRAINING FOR STORE SERVICE

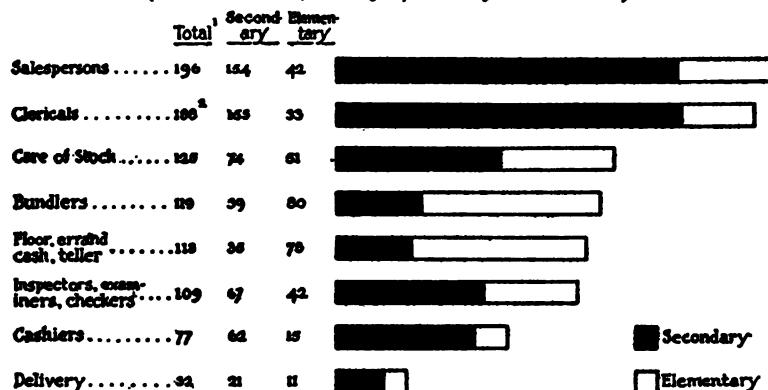
CHART X  
**DISTRIBUTION BY IMPORTANT OCCUPATIONS OF MALE AND FEMALE JUVENILE EMPLOYEES IN BOSTON  
 DEPARTMENT, DRY GOODS AND CLOTHING STORES**  
 (Selected from occupational groups of 1000 juvenile workers)



<sup>1</sup> Complete data for 1000 juvenile employees is given in Appendix 1, Table 4. Forty-one employed in miscellaneous occupations are not represented in the chart.

<sup>2</sup> This includes general clericals, bookkeepers and auditors in the financial division and the receiving clerks of the stock rooms. The bookers of the delivery department and the stampers and markers of the stock rooms have not been included in the group of clericals since they frequently do other tasks in their respective departments.

CHART XI  
**EDUCATION OF JUVENILE EMPLOYEES ENGAGED IN IMPORTANT OCCUPATIONS IN BOSTON DEPARTMENT,  
 DRY GOODS AND CLOTHING STORES**  
 (Selected from occupational groups of 1000 juvenile workers)



<sup>1</sup> Complete data for 1000 juvenile employees is given in Appendix 1, Table 4. Forty-one employed in miscellaneous occupations are not represented in the chart.

<sup>2</sup> This includes general clericals, bookkeepers and auditors in the financial division and the receiving clerks of the stock rooms. The bookers of the delivery department and the stampers and markers of the stock rooms have not been included in the group of clericals since they frequently do other tasks in their respective departments.

cent found employment in various subsidiary activities. It is evident that a sound program of vocational education for mercantile workers must prepare not only for salesmanship and for clerical work, but also must deal helpfully with the 60 per cent of the juvenile employees engaged in the subsidiary occupations. These vary greatly in vocational value; some afford opportunities for profitable business careers and others are "blind alley" jobs which should be held only for brief periods while preparing for more promising callings. A comprehensive vocational education program must be founded on a knowledge of the character and relative importance of these varied activities of juvenile mercantile employees. Details of sex distribution, educational attainments, and qualifications considered desirable for different positions will be given in the following discussions of store occupations.

#### SELLING

##### *Extent of Juvenile Employment*

After considering the costly and elaborately organized activities which are required before goods can be placed before the buying public, it is surprising to discover the frequency with which the critical transactions upon which all other store activities focus are entrusted to youthful and slightly trained salespeople. The Census of 1910 reported 14 per cent of the male and 29 per cent of the female salespeople of Boston to be under 21 years of age,<sup>2</sup> but the proportion of minors in the selling force of large stores, particularly in the department stores, probably is somewhat larger.<sup>3</sup> As already stated, about 20 per cent (19.6) of the thousand juveniles whose records were tabulated for this study were engaged in selling. The department and clothing stores used more of their juve-

<sup>2</sup>Male salespeople 11,602, of whom 1,670, or 14.4 per cent, were under 21. Female salespeople 6,393, of whom 1,864 or 29.1 per cent were under 21.

<sup>3</sup>In a Federal study of women employed in department and other retail stores in Boston, it was found that 43.7 per cent of the regular employees of whom 52 per cent were selling, were under 21 years of age; 56 per cent of those who served both as regular and irregular employees of whom 70 per cent were selling, were under 21; 45 per cent of the extra employees of whom 77 per cent were selling were under 21. *Unemployment Among Women in Department and Other Retail Stores of Boston*, Bulletin of the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Whole Number 182.

niles as salespeople than the dry goods stores, as the percentage distribution in the three types of stores was: department, 22.8, clothing 22.3, and dry goods 3.7 per cent engaged in selling. In the sample group of 21-year-old store employees, 30.4 per cent held selling positions, but only two of their 170 positions gave the rank of head of a department. We conclude that minors enter store employment through numerous subsidiary occupations; that when adult years are reached, nearly one-third have been promoted to selling positions; and that the younger members of the selling force are rarely entrusted with the more responsible supervisory positions.

#### *Sexes, Ages and Education of Juvenile Salespeople*

The largest sex and age group of the juvenile salespeople (45.9 per cent) was that of the females 16 and 17 years old, and the females of 18, 19 and 20 come next in size, (33.2 per cent). Slightly more than one in six of the salespeople were males, and these were rarely less than 18 years of age. Usually boys of adolescent years are clumsy and self-conscious and ill-adapted to positions requiring a pleasing personal bearing. They are used in department and clothing stores chiefly for the sale of men's furnishings. Over two-thirds of the juvenile salespeople were employed in handling the varied wares of the great department stores, so it is evident that the stocks of these stores furnish the best opportunities for early experience in salesmanship. However, little use was found for young persons with less than secondary school training, as over four-fifths of those who were selling had more than an elementary school education.

#### *Preference for Attractive Young Women*

The frequent commendation of the personal appearance of saleswomen favorably judged by store officials shows the strength of the conviction that the public buys most willingly from young, good-looking, neatly-dressed women. Questions may be raised as to whether this universal assumption on the part of men buyers and floor superintendents has any foundation in facts. The naive surprise with which one floor superintendent spoke of the large "books" of a middle-aged woman

who, although she was not particularly attractive or well-dressed, had won a following because she was jolly, talked well with customers and had a memory for names, suggests that men supervisors may have credited the buying public with their own personal preferences. Middle-aged women, seeking to supply family needs, are the chief purchasers of store wares, and it seems probable that service by kindly women of their own age would be acceptable.

#### *Comments Showing Qualifications Desired*

General desirable qualifications for salespeople, such as good health, neat and attractive but not conspicuous clothing, and pleasing manners with both fellow-workers and customers have been discussed.<sup>4</sup> The saleswoman who "dresses too flashily," "has fallen down in her personal appearance," or who "is apt to be too talkative," or "is too abrupt in her manner," surely will earn the disapproval of the person in charge of her department.

Care of the stock comes next in the frequency with which it is mentioned. The general appearance of a department suffers when salespeople allow goods to accumulate in a disorderly heap, while they rush from one customer to another. Such careless ways lower the profits of the department, since the goods deteriorate in value so that they must be sold at a loss. To win the entire approval of the head of the department, a salesperson must not only care for stock which he has shown, but also must be ready to assist a companion who has been overwhelmed with customers who have demanded an extensive display of merchandise. The salesman whose report reads, "Very pleasant with customers, knows his merchandise, looks after his own stock pretty well, but not willing to help anywhere else in the department," fell short of perfection in his calling.

The successful salesperson avoids spending too much time with one customer. The following are examples of this un-economical practice:

"Her biggest weakness is that she takes too much time with customers and cannot wait on as many as the other girls."

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<sup>4</sup>Chapter III, pp. 38-41.

"Shows a good deal of merchandise, but does not grasp the customer's ideas very quickly. She has to talk too much to find out what the customer wants and tries on too much merchandise."

At the opposite extreme is the saleswoman who was described as, "Attractive, bright and can wait on 4 customers at a time, \* \* \* alert, easy to get along with."

An unusual requirement is the demand that a salesman be prepared to quote statistics in defense of his department:

"Is a good man to keep up stock. \* \* \* Gets along well with people. Does not catch on to things quickly enough and does not fortify himself with statistics enough to meet criticisms that might be made against his department."

An experienced educational director of a large department store summed up the qualifications for a good salesperson as follows:

"The primary requisite for successful selling is an interest in people—a genuine desire to discover what they want and to supply their needs. A salesperson gifted with this natural social disposition is not annoyed by the queer folks with queer ways who turn up constantly. She makes friends and soon wins a following of grateful customers."

"The person who is timid and bashful should avoid store service," exclaimed this director. "It is not necessary to be unpleasantly aggressive, but a salesperson must have self-assurance; and a somewhat positive manner often convinces a vacillating customer."

Qualifications of successful salesmanship vary somewhat with the character of the goods handled. The superintendent of a corset department rejoiced in the services of a fitter who had been trained as a nurse and who "seemed to feel with her customer, very sympathetic, customers always satisfied, very easy and quiet. Does not show up, but has a great deal of knowledge which she has not the power to express."

#### *A Saleswoman with a Bright Future*

Reports showing the rapid rise of a young woman who was handicapped by a defective education give evidence of the promptness with which native ability may be recognized in a well-organized store:

“\_\_\_\_\_ entered the store in August, 1912. Had worked for \_\_\_\_\_. Is a very good cashier; can handle an immense amount of business very well. I don't think she has ever had a shortage. She is a good, clean-cut girl, about medium height, with very pleasing manners. People like her very much. She has done some selling in the department and is anxious to do more. The shoppers have given her splendid reports. Is quiet and particularly observing. She uses her wits and is always thinking about her job. Nothing gets by her. Has gotten the prize of ten dollars for detecting merchandise wrongly advertised.

“May, 1915, promoted to saleswoman.

“November, 1915—Is a fine girl \* \* \* strongest point is her keenness. Very observing, not afraid to ask good questions. Has a very trying stock, but keeps it better than anyone we have ever had. Think she would make good almost anywhere. Has not had a great deal of education—just grammar school. A very pleasant girl to get along with. Always interested in her work. Understands what a customer wants. Will try hard to satisfy. Was a bit timid at first, but now she talks right up.”

The buyer for this department adds his testimony: “Smart, nice to customers, and gives fine service. \* \* \* Has developed rapidly, will develop into assistant buyer by way of selling.”

#### *Clerical Occupations of Juvenile Employees of Department.*

##### *Dry Goods and Clothing Stores. Numbers Employed in Clerical Occupations*

Two policies adopted by progressive mercantile establishments have resulted in a great multiplication of clericals: (1) High-salaried officials must not waste time in record keeping which can be cared for by less expensive assistants. (2) The store managers or directors of important divisions and departments must have complete data showing the condition of the stocks, the costs of the different store services, and the profits or losses of each selling department. It is true also that with the growth of the business more clerical assistance becomes necessary in order to care for the great volumes of corre-

spondence developed in connection with the charge-accounts and mail-order departments. Many of these clerical services are simple, highly specialized tasks, and but few require the assumption of responsibility for important decisions, so that they are well adapted to the capacities of the younger, less experienced store workers. If we include persons giving the whole or a part of their time to such simple tasks as the booking of parcels in the delivery room, or the marking of new stock, the clericals constitute an occupational group slightly larger than that of the juvenile salespeople.\*

#### *Sexes, Ages and Education of Juvenile Clericals*

The sex distribution of the store clericals was the same as that of the salespeople, one in six were males. The ages varied with the types of work; there were a few simple tasks, like the auditing of sales slips, in which young persons of 14 to 16 could be employed and which were rarely done by persons over 18 years of age. On the other hand, three-fourths of the receiving clerks were 18-to-21-year-old men, and two-thirds of the bookkeepers also were in this age group. Considerable training is required by most of the clerical workers, 70 per cent had graduated from, or had gone as far as the last two years, of the secondary schools, and less than 18 per cent had no more than an elementary education.

#### *Characteristics of Successful Clericals Shown in Reports of Their Superior Officers*

General statements about the qualifications desired for store clericals are difficult because of the great variations in their tasks, but reports of their superior officers will suggest many personal characteristics which should be cultivated by young persons who wish to succeed in such positions. The report on a college graduate who is head of an important merchandise office indicates the beginning of a successful mercantile career.

“Appearance good, personality always pleasant, tactful, gets along well with people. \* \* \* Looks younger than he is and that is a handicap for an executive position. \* \* \*

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\*Details of the distribution of clericals are given in Note 1, page 43, and in Table 4, Appendix I, p. 119.

Always willing to help. \* \* \* Dependable, does not have to be followed up, initiative good, careful and accurate."

A young man who is recognized as a potential executive is given this description:

"Is new in the business, but is a gentleman. Has nice manners and pleasing personality. After he is experienced, I should think he would make some sort of an executive. He is capable, thinks quickly, moves quickly and shows good judgment. He has a nice personality, is well educated and speaks well, is attentive and on the job. Would make a good floor clerical or merchandise clerical. Believe he is a boy of good possibilities."

#### *A Typical Office Stenographer*

In the following report we recognize the young woman who will make a good office clerical but will not rise to an executive position:

"\_\_\_\_\_ comes from a splendid family and shows good upbringing. Is well educated and a good type girl right through. Very accurate in her work. She turns out a great deal of work and is a good stenographer. Does not seem to have a great deal of ambition and is lacking in force. She is rather timid and reserved, would probably not do in merchandising end of it for this reason. However, she is a fine girl in an office."

A mail order clerical is commended because she "follows things up closely and writes a good letter."

#### *A Merchandise Clerical Who is Forging Ahead*

Three reports on a merchandise clerical who had worked up from an inferior position throw light on the store experiences of young persons. The buyer writes:

"\_\_\_\_\_ came to me from the shipping room and at first developed very slowly—so slowly that I thought he would not do and tried to have him transferred. All of a sudden he began to pick up. Since then he has steadily forged ahead." \* \* \*

The employment department reports:

"\_\_\_\_\_ entered five years ago as a sorter; worked successfully on the chute, the elevator, packer, floor boy up stairs,

and stock. Ambitious, good judgment, good business ability, not tactful."

The floor superintendent's description reads:

"His strength is his persistence in digging out things. Always on the job. \* \* \* Is out to pick up all he can get in the way of information or anything else. Gets on well with people, ambitious."

#### *A Plodding Merchandise Clerical.*

"A plunger \* \* \* an excellent merchandise clerical \* \* \* Find him very valuable doing certain parts of the assistant buyer's work. Is a fellow who does not push himself much. Has been here about five or six years. Has a good knowledge of merchandise. Can go away and leave things with him and be sure they will get done. Needs somebody to show him how to work towards an assistant-buyership. Physically not big which possibly has been against him. Nothing the matter with his brain or his power of application. Uses his mind in his work. Ingenious in finding ways to get results. Everything he does he does right. If somewhat larger and pushed himself more would be further advanced."

#### *Floor Clericals*

An unusual clerical position, which often serves as a stepping-stone to an executive office, has been developed in one Boston store. The floor clerical has a desk located in the department which he or she serves, and relieves the floor superintendent of the keeping of records, serves as his substitute during the noon hour or other absences, and is in line of promotion to his position. The duties and vocational outlook of the floor clericals are suggested in the reports:

"\_\_\_\_\_ is without doubt the best floor clerical in the store. Very capable in making adjustments. Right on the job. Works after hours a great deal and gets in early. Extremely methodical. \* \* \* Handles a tremendous lot of detail very well. Was previously merchandise clerical in the department. \* \* \* Might be a very good woman as head of the complaint department. Is strong along those lines. Has not a big

physique and would not stand out among salespeople which might handicap her as a floor superintendent."

Another favorable report reads:

"\_\_\_\_\_ is a splendid clerical. Also helps \_\_\_\_\_ on floor work and relieves \_\_\_\_\_ at the noon hour. \* \* \* Very able and very adaptable. \* \* \* Very watchful. Has a good idea as to what the girls do in the different departments. Keeps a sort of general outlook on the floor as well as doing her desk work. The only thing in the work I hesitate about is perhaps her lack of convincing customers on complaints."

### *Summary*

Personal characteristics received much more consideration than technical ability in these estimates of the qualifications of juvenile store clericals, and there can be little doubt of their greater importance in determining promotion. The employment department makes sure of certain minimum standards of training and efficiency, and since the clerical work of stores usually requires diligence, neatness and accuracy, rather than a grasp of higher mathematics or exceptional literary ability, the traits sought in those recommended for the more important positions are intelligence, adaptability, initiative, and tact in dealing with fellow workers and customers.

## CARE OF STOCK

### *Duties of Stock Workers*

Two distinct groups of stock workers are found in the stores: (1) those who are employed chiefly in the stock rooms, and (2) those who serve as assistants to salespeople and who often are in line of promotion to selling positions. A brief outline of the care that must be given to goods passing through the stores will show the various groups of workers and their duties.

### *Receiving Clerks*

The new shipments of goods from the manufacturers or jobbers are handled first by the receiving clerks, who must check them with the invoices to see that no mistakes have been made in packing and billing the store orders. Only 4

of the 1,000 juveniles under 21 years of age were engaged in this responsible and often heavy work; three of the four were over 18 years of age and all had received secondary school training.

#### *Stampers and Markers*

The substitution of the store labels and price tags for those which may have been placed on the goods by the manufacturers is not so simple a task as might appear to a person unfamiliar with the practices of well-managed stores. While much of the mechanical work is done by young and inexperienced persons, it is necessary for them to be attentive and accurate in following the instructions of the buyers who usually are responsible for fixing the prices. Care must be exercised in order to stamp the correct sizes and prices on the tags attached to the garments, and sometimes store labels must be sewed in the place of those of the manufacturer. Other mysterious figures and letters which are added to the price tags, when interpreted by a person familiar with the store codes, reveal the costs, dates of purchase and names of the firms from whom the goods were procured. Thirteen of the 15 stampers and markers found in the sample group were females. Two-thirds were over 18 years old and had received more than two years of secondary school training, and only 2 had but an elementary education.

#### *Stock-rooms*

The merchandisers or buyers decide where the goods shall be sent after they have been marked properly. One part of the stock may be set aside for filling the mail orders, the buyer may plan an immediate special sale of another part, some goods will be used to maintain supplies in sales departments, and others will be sent to the stock-rooms to be held in reserve for use in the future. The heads of stocks and buyers of the different store departments must be quite familiar with the condition of these reserve stocks in order to be sure that supplies are kept up properly and that the store does not suffer losses because its capital is tied up in goods which stay on the shelves too long. Young stock workers who assist salespeople

soon learn where the goods of their departments are located, so that they can avoid delays in finding supplies needed to replace what has been taken by customers.

#### *Stock Workers of Selling Departments*

Juvenile stock workers are employed chiefly in assisting salespeople in the care of their stock, so that the position may be regarded as a sort of apprenticeship to selling. Eleven per cent of the juvenile store workers under 21 were caring for stock, but stock positions were a somewhat larger proportion (12.8 per cent) of those held when 21 years old. Nearly two-thirds (62.7 per cent) of the stock workers under 21 were females, but here again the proportion (41.2 per cent) of males was somewhat higher in the 21-year-old group. The proportion of juvenile store workers holding stock positions varied with the different types of stores as follows: department stores, 7.5 per cent; clothing, 13.1 per cent; dry goods, 20.4 per cent. In some stores the work of caring for the stock is apportioned among the salespeople so that only a small number of stock people appear on the pay rolls.

#### *Ages and Schooling of Stock Workers Similar to Those of Salespeople*

The close correspondence between juvenile sales and stock workers is shown by similarities in the ages and educational qualifications of the two groups. Only 10.9 per cent of the stock workers were under 16 years of age, 51.8 per cent were between 16 and 18 and 37.3 per cent were over 18. Over half (55.4 per cent) of the young persons in stock work had received high school training and almost one-third (30.9 per cent) had spent three or four years in secondary schools, while only 13.6 per cent had failed to reach the eighth grade.

#### *Comments on Stock Workers*

Characteristics commended or condemned in young stock workers, and also the positions to which they may be promoted, are shown in records taken from the store "Judgment Book:"

"\_\_\_\_\_ is very satisfactory as a stock girl, makes her head save her heels, moves quickly and thinks quickly. Pleasing

manners, very willing, might sell in some department where large physique is not necessary."

"\_\_\_\_\_ has been in the department 2 years. Does not have to be watched or prodded. Quick, pleasant disposition, inclined to be bashful. Appearance not good \* \* \* will be put to selling when there is an opening."

Possible lines of promotion open to such stock workers are shown by another report of a young woman who was serving at the basement refund desk:

"Promoted from a stock position, shrewd, can pretty nearly always tell whether a customer is right or not. Has tact, careful and accurate, does not get flustered. Picked her out because she impressed me and others as being bright. Recommend her promotion to saleswoman or office clerical."

Another girl who had done part merchandise-clerical and part stock work, was transferred to an important cashier's desk where she served for 5 years. It was recommended that she be considered for a selling position.

#### *Unsatisfactory Stock Workers*

Two reports give pictures of stock girls whose future in store work seems precarious:

"Lacks energy and spirit, not keen and does not grasp things quickly. Is inclined to 'putter' around. Not live and aggressive. Does not always show a willing spirit. If asked to do anything out of the way of her work, does not do it gracefully. Is always making excuses for a thing not being done. Do not think she has much future in the store."

"I am afraid she is getting into bad habits, such as wandering off from the floor without asking, so that you never can tell where she is, but when talked to, she did better. Willing, teachable, sells at noon. Obeys cheerfully, a little slow."

Sometimes a change to work in another department makes it possible to avoid discharging a person whose supervisors feel dissatisfied with his services. A man who had served as stock and general handy man for 4 years and then tried the work of a merchandise clerical for one year, was the subject of very adverse reports. It was claimed that he was capable of better things, but had gotten into a rut. He was transferred to another department, where he "made good."

*A High Class Stock Marker*

"Very accurate, very careful, knows the merchandise, thorough in his work \* \* \* dependable. Good possibility for an assistant buyer in another year. \* \* \* Health good, very energetic, appearance good. \* \* \* Grasps situation quickly. \* \* \* Left \$20 position to come in here and work his way up. \* \* \* I think he is a high school graduate."

*Summary*

The general term "stock workers" is often applied to a group whose tasks are imperfectly standardized; on one hand the duties of a marker or merchandise clerical may be combined with the handling of new goods in the stock-room, and on the other the stock worker may do chores for a selling department, or may serve as a sort of junior salesperson. Intelligence and accuracy and a cheerful willingness to do whatever tasks are assigned by supervisors seem to be the characteristics which give satisfaction. Exceptional ability and a pleasing personality may win promotion to a position as cashier or office clerical, or as salesperson in the department whose stock has been learned.

**RAPID CHANGES IN NUMBERS EMPLOYED IN MINOR JUVENILE STORE OCCUPATIONS**

But slightly less than stock workers in numerical importance are the two groups of boys and girls who hold the "blind alley" jobs of the great stores. Fortunately the war-time shortage of store workers, the increased expense due to acceptance of minimum wage rulings in January, 1916, and the efforts of progressive store managers to improve both the personnel and vocational outlook of their employees are resulting in a rapid reduction in the number who do these mechanical and uninteresting tasks. Thus we find that 21 to 25 per cent of the juveniles who entered stores in 1913, 1914 and 1915 were employed as bundlers, while in 1918 the numbers engaged in this least desirable of store occupations was only 2.7 per cent.

Intelligent customers have been offended by the sight of errand boys and girls who were obviously wasting the years

which should have been spent in school rooms, busy ones have been exasperated by the long delays in receiving bundles and change due to the natural childish disposition to loiter, and fastidious persons have been annoyed by the chorus of irritated yells for "cash" which added to the confusion of a crowded store, but these evils have been done away with in the well-organized Boston stores. The cash and bundling activities have been decentralized, and clasp envelopes and cash registers have made it possible to dispense with the youngest and least trained of the store workers. The summaries of the characteristics and duties of these occupation groups apply chiefly to workers who entered stores prior to 1916.

**DISTRIBUTION AND QUALIFICATIONS OF JUVENILE EMPLOYEES IN  
MINOR STORE OCCUPATIONS**

*Bundlers*

Bundlers wrap small parcels for immediate delivery to customers. Almost half of them (43.8 per cent) were children under 16 years of age, and but 10 per cent were over 18; the remainder were in those critical adolescent years (16 to 18) when they should have been learning something useful. They were in need of more schooling as a fourth of them had not reached the 8th grade and over two-thirds had not gone beyond the elementary schools; only ten per cent went as far as the third year of the secondary course. Nine out of ten of the bundlers were little girls who were beginning their mercantile careers handicapped by this lack of training. The clothing stores have been most successful in the elimination of child labor as only 4 of their 251 juvenile employees were bundling, in contrast with the 15.7 per cent of the department and 14.2 per cent of the dry goods store juveniles who did this work.

*Floor, Errand, Cash, Teller*

The terms "floor," "errand," "cash" or "teller" designate the other group of children whose services are being dispensed with in the more progressive stores. Their ages and education—or lack of education—corresponded closely with that of the bundlers. Half of them were under sixteen and only 2 per cent were over 18 years old. One-fifth had not reached

the eighth grade in school and over two-thirds had failed to go beyond the elementary school. The work is better suited to boys, and such tasks constitute 15 per cent of the store positions held by males of 14 to 21, yet nearly two-thirds (73.5 per cent) of the children who spent eight hours a day running to and fro with bundles and change were little girls. The proportions of juveniles in the three types of stores employed in such work were: clothing 3.6 per cent, department 10.2 per cent, dry goods 27.2 per cent.

#### *Cashiers, Inspectors, Examiners, Checkers*

Prompt and reliable service for customers requires that there be no mistakes in the sales slips, or pricing and measuring of the goods sold, that the articles sold to different customers shall not be slipped into the wrong envelopes or bundles, and that the change for cash purchases shall be counted accurately. Cashiers handle the money; they must note whether the sum received corresponds with the amount credited on the sales slip and must count out the difference between this and the total of the purchases to be returned to the customer in change. The assistants of the cashiers are variously designated as "inspectors," "examiners," or "checkers." They examine the sales slip to see whether it is correctly filled in and whether mistakes have been made in calculating the amounts, and verify the change given by the cashier. If there is a price mark on the goods they compare it with that of the sales slip, and sometimes they re-measure or re-count the goods before putting them in envelopes or giving them to the bundlers for wrapping. The earlier store organization plans provided central offices to which cash or errand boys and girls carried the goods sold, the sales slips and money, and from which they delivered the wrapped bundle and the customer's change. Sometimes there were overhead trolley systems by which baskets of merchandise and cash carriers were delivered and returned from the central offices. Another common plan which is found in many Boston stores is that by which the making of change and examining of sales slips is done in a central office which connects with store departments by an elaborate pneumatic tube system of cash carriers. The sales-

people slip the articles sold into clasp envelopes and deliver them to waiting customers, or send larger purchases to the wrapping desks located nearest their departments.

#### *Decentralizing the Cash System*

A rapid decentralization of the cash system is being brought about in the Boston stores by the increasing use of cash registers and by installing floor cashiers or cash desks in or near each department. In all cases where the wares sold are not bulky and the amounts of the sales are small, it is possible for the salespeople to complete the transactions by the use of cash registers and envelope wrappers. This means prompt delivery to the customer and greatly lessened cost of service. The local or departmental cashiers are supplied each day with a sum of money with which to make change, and also are usually connected with a central office by means of the pneumatic tube system. Frequently they are assisted by inspectors or examiners, though in smaller departments one person is able to make change and wrap the parcels. These local cashier stations greatly reduce the confusion and delay in handling the packages delivered to customers and there is less danger of mistakes in wrapping the goods.

#### *Characteristics of Inspectors, Examiners, or Checkers*

Quickness, accuracy and attention to details are necessary in this work, and there seems to be a general assumption that these qualifications are more often found in young women, as 74 of the 75 young persons of our sample group who reported this work were females. Nearly two-thirds (62.4 per cent) of these workers were between the ages of 16 and 18, and only 28 per cent were less than 16 years old. Over 60 per cent had high school training and only 7 per cent had left school before reaching the eighth grade.

#### *Age and Schooling of Cashiers*

Somewhat greater maturity and training are required for cashiers than for the inspectors and examiners who assist in their work. Only 1 in 8 (13 per cent) was less than 16 years of age, and the number who were 18 to 21 years old (41.6 per cent) was almost as great as that of the 16 to 18 group. Here

again females rather than males are selected for the work as 43 of the 45 cashiers were young women. In no case was a young person who had failed to reach the eighth grade employed as a cashier and over half (54.5 per cent) had completed three or more years of the secondary schools.

#### COMMENTS OF STORE OFFICIALS ON EXAMINERS AND CASHIERS

*Qualifications Desired.* Much the same qualifications are desired in successful examiners and cashiers. Quiet manners and a disposition to attend strictly to business, combined with quickness, accuracy and capacity to care for details, are the traits that are desired in the young women engaged in these occupations.

#### *Undesirable Employees*

The first report describes an examiner whose work was satisfactory but whose personal habits prevented rapid promotion:

“\_\_\_\_\_ is a very careful, quick examiner. Her work is very well done in every way. \* \* \* Is rather loud talking and needs to overcome that \* \* \* will be cashier for the next year or two.”

The report on a girl who is about to lose her job reads:

“\_\_\_\_\_ has been handling cash and has had a lot of shortages, so I had to take the cash box away from her. Has good interest; simply careless and slow. She will last out the Christmas holidays and that is all.”

The head cashier found means of remedying the unbusinesslike habits of the next case:

“\_\_\_\_\_ often has to be called up closely on her habits; sometimes she chews gum and such things. \* \* \* Often had visitors at her desk, (Transferred to a desk inaccessible to visitors) \* \* \* now does not have any more people come to see her but applies herself closely.”

#### *Satisfactory Cashiers*

“She is a quiet girl who tends to her business all the time \* \* \* has never been taxed to her greatest capacity, but gets things done and does not let anything slide by. Is careful and

accurate. \* \* \* Is not one who runs the minute the bell rings but sees that her work is all cleared up."

"\_\_\_\_\_ former auditing office clerk. Not very neat or attractive, but gets along well with the girls. Her future is in cashiering."

"Is well liked among her salespeople. \* \* \* Does not show any particular initiative but has a lot of energy and is attentive and on the job. Her future is hardly selling but she would make a good clerical."

#### *A Cashier with a Bright Future*

"\_\_\_\_\_ is a girl who can do any two girls' work. \* \* \* I consider her a wonder. Has very good physique, neat and nice looking. Tends to her business and works hard all the time. Seems to be able to turn out any amount of work. Is one of the most insistent cashiers we have as far as rules go \* \* \* shows good initiative and is very observing. \* \* \* Is very careful about her desk, neat and mechanical \* \* \* would make an unusually pleasant saleswoman, and one people would like to come to."

#### *Delivery*

A surprisingly small number of our sample group of juveniles—only 32 in 1,000—were employed in the delivery of merchandise. Over half (19 in 30) of the delivery positions of our sample group were in the packing rooms where the work was much like that of the girl bundlers. An outline of the processes through which a parcel passes before reaching the door of its purchaser will show the duties of other persons connected with the delivery department.

Collectors gather the bundles from the wrapping or cashier desks and take them to the central delivery rooms. A chute may be used for some parcels, but delicate or breakable articles are carried to the expert packers who prepare them for safe transportation. A revolving belt may be used to expedite the work of sorting the packages. Special delivery and C. O. D. parcels must be set aside for prompt attention, and in some stores all bundles that are charged are held until the accounts of persons to whom they are addressed have been

investigated. The sales checks and shipping tickets of the bundles are carefully verified. When parcels are ready to send out, the sorters distribute them to the "drivers' bins," which hold the goods assigned to the different delivery routes which cover the city and its suburbs. Bookers must prepare records showing what goes into each load and what collections will be due on the C. O. D. parcels. The drivers and chauffeurs and their assistants then become responsible for the delivery or safe return of their consignments.

Quick-witted, responsible workers are required for much of this work, so that the younger juveniles are employed chiefly as assistants to older men. Among 155 positions held by male store employees when 21 years old, the following were in the delivery department: 2 collectors, 5 porters, 7 team boys and auto helpers, 2 drivers and chauffeurs. Half of the 32 delivery department employees of our 14-to-21-year-old juveniles were in the 16 to 18 age group and a third (11) were over 18. Three-fourths had left school after completing the elementary course, or the first year of the secondary schools.

#### *Chances of Promotion in the Delivery Department*

An inside worker who is energetic and knows how to handle men may obtain a supervisory position in the shipping rooms. The report on an assistant in line for this promotion reads: "\_\_\_\_\_ handles men well and is sure to get a day's work out of them. He will always try to get the best results out of people and is on the job every minute." Helpers on the delivery wagons and automobiles must learn their routes, and prove themselves to be thoroughly responsible before they can be trusted with loads of expensive goods. Usually they are required to give bonds, so that the stores will be protected from losses due to dishonesty or carelessness.

#### COMMENTS SHOWING QUALIFICATIONS DESIRED FOR VARIOUS MISCELLANEOUS POSITIONS

A man who wished an executive position was found unsuitable, "because people do not care for him. His habits are good, but he has a repulsive personality and bad manners."

A woman with executive ability, though not of an engaging

personality, is described thus: "Is very ambitious. Is of the fighting ambitious kind, and right on the job. \* \* \* If anything is wrong about the merchandise, she notices it and speaks of it. Has been doing a very good job and I feel she will make a good \_\_\_\_\_. Has no close friends. Wont stand for a shirker. Does her own work and wants everyone else to do theirs."

The qualifications desired in a window decorator are shown in the report: "He is an artist, a fine decorator with originality and good taste. Gets things done without friction or complaint. Is full of energy and has great interest in his work and is always willing. \* \* \* He is a natural born leader among people and his men all like him. He is certainly capable of holding down a real, good job."

Here is a pen portrait of a model elevator operator: "\_\_\_\_ is more than courteous to people. Seems to call out the floors in a very attractive way, almost as if to invite people to get off. A great many people come to me and speak to me about him,—what a careful, good, all-around man he is."

#### **EMPLOYEES OF RESTAURANTS AND MANUFACTURING DEPARTMENTS**

Consideration of the personal characteristics desired and of the vocational training needed by juveniles employed in the restaurants and manufacturing departments of great stores will be given little attention in this study, because these subjects belong properly in other fields of vocational education. Girls trained in the needle trades may find work in the alteration and millinery rooms; and boys may use their knowledge of carpentry, plumbing and electric wiring, in the making of furniture and installing of household equipment or decorations. The training and qualifications of restaurant workers differ radically from those of store employees, and must be considered in a separate study. Girls employed in the millinery and alterations rooms and an occasional waitress may be promoted to regular store positions, but the majority of the persons found in the restaurants and manufacturing departments are of somewhat different types from those who make satisfactory mercantile workers.

## CHAPTER V

### SHIFTING OF YOUNG STORE WORKERS

#### *Introduction*

Shifting, or changing from one position to another, by young store workers whose experiences were studied in the course of this investigation, may be compared to the activities of an intricate piece of machinery with a general movement of its own, and having wheels within wheels, all going at varying speeds. The general movement was supplied by war-time economic changes; the industrial depression of 1915 was followed by an outburst of manufacturing in the latter part of 1916. High wages were enticing many new workers into the factories during the months when our investigators were trying to locate the young persons of the sample group. Some months later the business of the stores was increased by the resulting greater purchasing power of wage earners. The ebb and flow of store workers, while subject to these general economic changes, were influenced also by the usual seasonal variations in the demands for merchandise, and by differences in the types of stores, and in the sexes, ages, occupations and personal characteristics of the young workers. While many of these forces were acting simultaneously, it will be necessary for the sake of simplicity to treat them serially.

#### *Sources of Information*

Four sources of information supplied the data used as the basis for our discussion; differences in the value and scope of this information have made it difficult to present a well-defined picture, but the evidence is sufficient to permit reliable estimates of the amount of, the routes, the seasonal variations and the reasons for these vocational shifting.

(1) The certificates which are obtained at the time of entering upon each position have been our most important sources of information. It is particularly easy to follow the fluctuations in the amount of store work done by children fourteen

to sixteen years old, since both the employers and the occupations are reported on the certificates obtained with every change of position. The sample group of educational certificates supplied information about the experiences of over 1,500 young persons who had held positions in stores when 19 to 21 years old,<sup>1</sup> but since the law requiring the certification of young persons of 16 to 21 was not strictly enforced, it is probable that the certificates on file do not give a complete history of their working experiences.

(2) Application schedules of candidates for store positions supplied a second source of information about shifting. These vocational histories of persons employed or seeking employment were found in several establishments. One large store placed at our disposal a double file of such records; one which was called the "live" file contained the schedules for persons then in the employ of the firm, and the second known as the "dead" file had similar records for young persons who had left. Since this firm required every applicant to account for all his time since leaving school, and since all statements of previous employment were carefully verified by the employment department, there could be no question about the completeness and reliability of the information. But here again the data must be used with some reservations because this store had educational requirements above the average, so that it is probable that the bulk of our application schedule information applied to young persons with somewhat shorter working experiences than were characteristic of the entire body of young store workers.

(3) Pay-roll records were used to determine the length of service in the employing firms, and the months of entering and leaving service. These records also supplied the employers' reports of reasons for shifting. Such written records were rarely found in the smaller establishments.

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<sup>1</sup>The Massachusetts laws require "employment certificates" for all working minors 14 to 16 years old, and "educational certificates" for young persons over 16 and under 21 years of age employed in factory, workshop, manufacturing, mechanical, or mercantile establishments. We used the expired educational certificates of juveniles who reached their twenty-first birthdays between July 1, 1915, and June 30, 1916. There were 6395 young persons in this sample group of whom 1530 had been employed in mercantile establishments.

(4) The number of young persons of the sample group who were found by our field workers at the last place to which they had been certificated was another index of the amount of shifting. However, as already stated, the investigation was made during months when there was an abnormal tendency to seek the highly paid war work. Visits were made to the homes of a small group who showed an exceptional instability in their vocational experiences.

#### *The Amount of Shifting*

The minimum shifting tendency is that shown by the certificates of the 19 to 21 year old sample group: of 1,530 young persons whose last educational certificates authorized work in the types of stores studied, 1,137 or 74 per cent had held but one certificate between September, 1913, and July, 1916. Apparently all the shifting had been confined to 26 per cent or about one-fourth of the young persons of the sample group. The numbers of positions which they had held varied, as three-fifths had received only 2 certificates, one-fifth 3 and the other fifth from 4 to 14. Those whose certificates indicated more than one employer for each year comprised but 4.7 per cent of the entire group. The clothing stores and miscellaneous group of smaller stores had a more stable working force than the department, dry goods and five-and-ten-cent stores. This relatively small amount of shifting in the sample group of young persons 19 to 21 years old suggests that the positions of store workers may become fairly stable in the later adolescent years.<sup>2</sup> The evidence of the certificates is corroborated by the results of an investigation by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics; reports from over a thousand women regularly employed in Boston retail stores indicated that 90 per cent had held positions in but one store during the year ending July 31, 1914.<sup>3</sup> This was true also of 65 per cent of those who had served only as extras, and of 50 per cent of those who had been both regular and extra employees.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup>The application schedules which gave the work records of an earlier and longer age period, i. e., from the age of leaving school until 21, indicated a larger amount of shifting.

<sup>3</sup>Unemployment Among Women in Department and Other Retail Stores of Boston, p. 23, Bulletin 182, U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 58, 47.

This evidence of stability of employment given by the relatively small number who held certificates for more than one employer when they were 19 to 21 years old, and by the reports of investigations during the year before the outbreak of war, was contradicted by the fact that only a third of the sample group could be located on October first, 1916, at the stores which their certificates indicated to be the last places of employment before reaching adult years. The probable explanations of the discrepancy seem to be,—(1) laxity in the administration of the certification law which permits an increasing carelessness of the older adolescent group, resulting in the failure to register all their employment adventures; and (2) the business depression of 1915, the enforcement of the minimum wage for women store workers in January, 1916, and the remarkable development of war industries in the latter part of 1916, combined to produce an unusual tendency for store workers to lose or abandon their positions.

The total certificates issued during this period to wage earning minors supply an index of their employment, and the reissued certificates show roughly the amount of their shifting. The increase between 1915 and 1916 in the number of work certificates obtained by juveniles was 7,591, or 107.6 per cent, for the children of 14 to 16, and 10,583, or 38.2 per cent, for the young persons of 16 to 21. The shifting or reissued certificates of the latter group increased by 9,466, or 57.5 per cent, so it is evident that 1916 was a period of great economic readjustment. That the current was setting away from the stores is shown by the disappearance of two-thirds of the young store workers of our sample group and by changes in the percentage of children of 14 to 16 who obtained certificates authorizing them to work in stores. The number of such certificates increased by 658, or 28.7 per cent, but at the same time the number of certificates authorizing work in factories and workshops increased by 6,333 or 276.2 per cent. If the total certificates issued are divided into three groups authorizing work in (1) factories and workshops, (2) stores, and (3) offices and all other places of employment, a radical change in the war-time distribution of the certificates will be noticed. Between 1915

and 1916 the certificates authorizing employment in stores and in offices decreased 12.6 and 13.8 per cent respectively, while those issued for factory work increased 26.4 per cent. In the busy season of 1916 there were over twenty-five thousand more workers employed in Boston industries than had been in the factories during the previous year.<sup>5</sup> The decrease in school attendance which began at this time indicates that many of the new workers were children,<sup>6</sup> but the chief increases in the numbers of certificates issued were due to the excessive shifting of this period. In the absence of any recognized agencies for dealing with such an economic crisis, the readjustments were effected by means of increased demands expressed in offers of higher wages for factory work, and greater supply made possible by the restlessness of youth, discontent with wages and chances of employment,<sup>7</sup> and the lack of business loyalties which result from the careless and impersonal policies of many large mercantile establishments.

The varying potency of these latter forces is shown by the ability of different types of stores to retain the young workers who had enlisted in their services before the culmination of the wartime changes. The great department stores with their diversified and slightly skilled positions, and seasonal variations in business, employed workers with little vocational stability, as but 66.6 had held one certificate and only 21 per cent were found with the firms for which their last certificates were issued. The Boston dry goods stores retained the highest percentage of the certificated group, as half were found present on October first, but the suburban firms complained bitterly of the disposition of their young employees to leave them as soon as they learned enough about the business to be useful, and their percentage of faithful workers was only half that of the dry goods stores in the city proper. The percentage of stability of the clothing stores fell between that of the department and dry goods stores, but the variations within the group were so great that it has little significance. Differ-

<sup>5</sup>Census of Manufactures, 1915, p. 36; 1916, p. 36.

<sup>6</sup>Statistics of school attendance are given in the sketch on "War-time Child Labor in Boston," *Child Labor Bulletin*, November, 1918, pp. 186-190.

<sup>7</sup>Reasons for leaving store positions are given in Table 3, p. 78.

ences in ability to retain employees between stores of the same type suggest that care in selecting employees, the wages paid and firm policies in dealing with their workers are more significant factors in determining the degree of stability in employment than the size and location of the store or kind of merchandise.

#### *Variations between the Sexes in the Amount of Shifting*

There were marked differences between the sexes in the amount of shifting. The verified application schedules giving complete wage-earning experiences showed that the boys had averaged 2.37 and the girls 1.63 positions before entering the firms where they were last known to be employed. The wage-earning histories supplied by young persons who were 21 years old, covering all the experiences of their minorities, bring out the differences more clearly, as the boys averaged 3.31 and the girls 2 positions.<sup>8</sup> Reports of the members of the sample group retaining their positions show the same tendency, as 35.2 per cent of the girls and 24.1 per cent of the boys were found at the addresses given on their last certificates. However, the young men showed greater stability in 2 department and 2 dry goods stores, and this was true also of the jewelry stores, where men strengthen their vocational outlook by learning stone setting or jewelry repairing.

#### *Characteristics of Extreme Shifters*

An effort was made to discover the characteristics of the young persons whose wage earning records diverged widely from the average; visits were made to the homes of 31 of the sample group whose numerous certificates indicated highly varied business careers, and the young persons or their relatives were questioned in order to discover the reasons for their frequent changes of employment. These extreme shifters did not constitute a homogeneous group, but scattered in both directions; on one hand were the defective and degenerate who were unable to hold their places and on the other were the

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<sup>8</sup>The difference in the vocational stability of the two sexes is somewhat less than appears from these percentages, as studies of the ages when school is left made in our Research Department show that girls go to work one to two years later than boys. See Tables 2-a and 2-b.

# SHIFTING OF YOUNG STORE WORKERS 71

alert and capable who never missed a chance to better their wages or positions. Typical cases were 2 who were constitutionally inferior,—one epileptic and one deaf,—both of whom

TABLE 2-a. NUMBER OF POSITIONS HELD BY 168 BOYS PREVIOUS TO ENTERING THE LAST KNOWN PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT, DISTRIBUTED BY AGE ON ENTERING THE FIRM, BASED ON VERIFIED APPLICATION SCHEDULES

Age on Entering the Firm	Number of Young Persons	Total Number of Positions	Average Number of Positions Per Person	Number of Previous Positions					
				None	1	2	3	4	5
Total, .....	168	397	2.36	15	40	44	33	20	9
Under 18 years, .....	13	21	1.62	3	4	4	1	1	1
18 years and under 19, .....	84	171	2.04	8	21	27	20	5	2
19 years and under 20, .....	27	74	2.74	2	4	5	6	8	2
20 years and under 21, .....	18	45	2.50	2	4	6	2	1	1
21 years and under 22, .....	26	86	3.31	..	7	2	5	5	4

TABLE 2-b. NUMBER OF POSITIONS HELD BY 252 GIRLS PREVIOUS TO ENTERING THE LAST KNOWN PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT, DISTRIBUTED BY AGE ON ENTERING THE FIRM, BASED ON VERIFIED APPLICATION SCHEDULES

Age on Entering the Firm	Number of Young Persons	Total Number of Positions	Average Number of Positions Per Person	Number of Previous Positions					
				None	1	2	3	4	5
Total, .....	252	413	1.64	45	82	75	27	17	5
Under 18 years .....	21	22	1.05	6	9	5	1	..	..
18 years and under 19, .....	136	213	1.57	20	49	44	16	7	..
19 years and under 20, .....	31	52	1.68	8	11	4	3	3	1
20 years and under 21, .....	24	46	1.92	4	6	7	4	1	2
21 years and under 22, .....	40	80	2.00	7	7	15	3	6	2

shifted about because unable to compete with those of better endowment. One boy naturally was a "bum" and never stuck to anything more than a few weeks. Three girls also had restless spells: one left position after position and when last heard from was about to become an unmarried mother; another tried numerous occupations including soap, razor and shoe manufacturing; while a third, a descendant of sea captains, finally found satisfaction as a migrating waitress. Of the poorly trained, one Jewess felt little compulsion to work because her sisters earned enough to supply the family needs, but, prodded by her mother, she occasionally took a temporary position. A boy, raised by his grandmother and educated in private schools, visited relatives in the summer and did odd jobs in the winter. Enterprising young persons who desired to "better themselves" formed the largest group, but even this desire occasionally ran rampant, as in one boy who held five jobs between December and the following October.

*Other Occupations of Young Store Workers*

Positions held before receiving the last educational certificate, or before filling the application forms, were but slightly influenced by war-time changes in the distribution of labor, so that the records used in the investigation give a typical picture of the vocational migrations of the young persons who were registered in stores when nearing their twenty-first birthdays. Of the 689 previous certificates issued to 1,476 young men and women,<sup>9</sup> more than half authorized employment in stores, a quarter were for non-metal manufacturing, and the other quarter were divided between metal manufacturing, various skilled trades, food industries, and miscellaneous businesses. A similar distribution is found in the four subdivisions of the selling group, namely: (1) Department and dry goods, (2) Clothing and specialty, (3) Five-and-Ten-Cent, and (4) Other stores, but the clothing stores employed a slightly higher proportion of workers with earlier selling experience. One-fourth of the previous certificates of the employees of each type of store authorized employment in non-metal manufacturing establishments. Since the term includes many firms manufacturing clothing and other commodities sold in the stores where later positions were found, this seems a natural line of promotion. The higher proportion of previous employment in the metal manufacturing and skilled trades of workers last found in the group of miscellaneous stores may be explained by the fact that a larger percentage of this group were boys.<sup>10</sup>

The distribution of the previous positions reported on the application forms of 420 store workers differed but slightly from that of the certification records; half were in other stores, but relatively to the total number in the group, only half as many as in the larger group had been in non-metal manufacturing, twice as many had been in the food industries, and ten times as many in miscellaneous occupations. The fact that the firm to which applications were made had a restaurant, an employee's lunch room and a soda fountain ex-

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<sup>9</sup>Full explanations of the requirements of the Massachusetts law, and details of our sample group, will be found in Appendix I.

<sup>10</sup>Fifty-one per cent compared with 24.5 per cent for the department stores, 39.4 per cent for the specialty, and none for the 5-and-10-cent stores.

plains the larger proportion drawn from the food industries; while the miscellaneous group of previous positions includes those occupations such as office work and domestic service, for which certificates are not required.

The percentage distribution of the previous certificates of the young persons last employed by non-selling firms is the reverse of that of the store employees. Of the 2,292 earlier certificates obtained by them, 54 per cent were for non-metal manufacturing and 19 per cent for selling, or the young persons whose last juvenile positions were in stores had held relatively twice as many previous store positions and half as many factory positions as the young persons who were certificated for other than store work just before reaching their twenty-first birthdays.

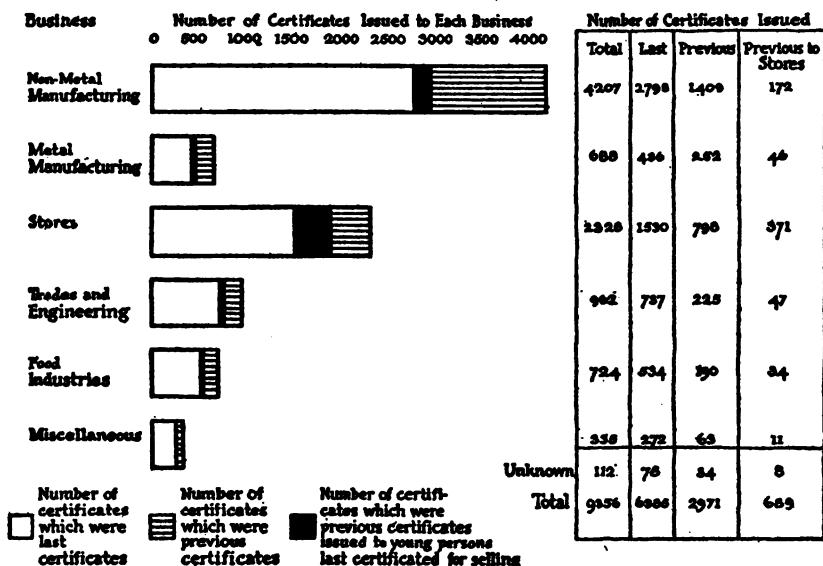
The tendency of the retail selling group to shift from one store position to another rather than into non-selling businesses is shown also by an examination of the entire number of certificates issued for each business, the proportion which were last certificates and previous certificates and the proportion of the previous certificates which authorized employment in stores. As the selling group comprises 24 per cent, or roughly speaking, a quarter of the total group, if the previous certificates issued for each business were distributed by chance among the different groups, in each case a quarter would have been issued to young persons last certificated for selling. As a matter of fact 53.8 per cent of previous certificates issued for stores, 18.2 per cent of those issued for non-metal manufacturing, 15 per cent for metal manufacturing, 18.3 per cent for trades, 25.2 per cent for food industries, 29.3 per cent for miscellaneous and 15.6 per cent for unknown, were issued to young persons last certificated for stores; or the sellers have much more previous selling experience and less experience in other businesses, especially unskilled factory work, than a simple chance distribution would give them. This is shown in Chart IV, where the bars represent the total number of certificates issued to each group of businesses, the blank portion the number of these which were last certificates, the shaded portion the number which were previous certificates and the

solid black the proportion which were previous certificates authorizing work in stores. It will be seen that about half of the shifting of the young persons was a change of employer rather than of business or occupation.

*Shifting Due to Seasonal Variations in the Opportunities for Employment in Stores*

The entire force of retail department, dry-goods and clothing store employees is kept in a more or less unstable condition because of continual changes due to seasonal variations in the demands for the commodities which they handle. Each year has four shopping seasons: summer clothing must be bought in the spring and winter clothing in the fall; Christmas brings the heaviest buying of the year, when there are demands for the miscellaneous goods sold in department stores and for extra clothing to be used as gifts; an artificial shopping season is created in January by special sales in which shop-worn stocks are cleared away preparatory to another round of business.

CHART IV  
DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL NUMBER OF CERTIFICATES ISSUED TO 6385 YOUNG PERSONS BY BUSINESSES, DIVIDED INTO LAST CERTIFICATES AND PREVIOUS TO LAST CERTIFICATES, AND SHOWING THE NUMBER OF PREVIOUS CERTIFICATES FOR EACH BUSINESS WHICH WERE ISSUED TO YOUNG PERSONS LAST CERTIFICATED FOR STORES AND SELLING



*Extra or Special Store Workers*

As many as five different kinds of extra or special workers were used in the Boston stores to meet these business fluctuations: (1) regular extras, (2) seasonal extras, (3) irregular extras on call, (4) special sale extras, and (5) part-time extras. The first group was regularly employed for busy periods of the week, as on Monday and on Saturday afternoon and evening. Many stores co-operate with the high-school salesmanship classes by employing students on these days. Women who wish to earn money, but whose home duties do not permit full-time services, are glad to take such positions. Ambitious and needy men and women sometimes serve in stores as Saturday extras after discharging the duties of other industrial and educational positions. The seasonal extras employed at Christmas or in the spring often obtain continuous work, so that their positions differ but slightly from those of many regular workers. The third type of extras are those who are listed by employment managers as ready to serve whenever notified. Sometimes these extras call regularly for assignments to departments of the stores where assistance is needed. Such special workers may be listed for extra services in several stores. Large special sales making necessary sudden increases of the selling force may bring in another class of temporary workers. A fifth class of extras are the part-time workers like floor cashiers and salespeople who come in to relieve the strain of business from 11 to 3, or restaurant workers, like busboys and waitresses, who are needed only while meals are being served.

About four-fifths<sup>11</sup> of the extras are saleswomen whose services are required to prevent waste of time for the customers, and the remainder are scattered through various occupation groups. Thus in one large store a list of extras under 21 years of age was distributed as follows: Of 56 girls, 44 were saleswomen, 8 floor cashiers, 3 errand girls and 1 a marker; and of 28 boys, there were 9 delivery team or auto helpers, 8 salesmen, 4 collector boys or examiners, 1 stock boy, 1 bundler, 1

<sup>11</sup>Unemployment Among Women in Department and other Retail Stores of Boston, Bulletin U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, No. 182, p. 62.

clerical, 1 marker, 1 sorter and 2 doing miscellaneous work. Many who were regulars when 21 years old reported previous services as specials. When the records of 21-year-old workers in all departments were examined, it was found that 11.2 per cent of the men and 17.6 per cent of the women had served apprenticeships as specials before obtaining regular employment.

#### *Months of Issuance of Certificates Authorizing Store Work*

Similar seasonal variations in the employment of young store workers are shown by the monthly variations in the number of certificates authorizing store work, and by pay-roll records giving the dates of leaving store positions. The largest number of certificates was issued in January, a month when much shifting between stores takes place. Many of the extra workers required to handle the Christmas trade are discharged, and there is a tendency to go from one firm to another for temporary service in the special sales, so that the records show high percentages both of those entering upon and those leaving employment. During the busy spring months the labor force becomes more stable, but the summer brings a dull season when even the regular workers take a voluntary or enforced vacation.<sup>12</sup> A general reorganization of the store force takes place in September, as the pay-rolls show employees leaving both for personal and firm reasons, and the large issuance of certificates proves that they are finding other store positions. The number employed increases during the fall months until it reaches the maximum for the year in December, which is the only month of employment for many of the extra workers.<sup>13</sup>

#### *Shifting from Factories and Other Stores in Busy Seasons*

These seasonal variations in opportunities for store employment promote two kinds of shifting among young persons eligible to such positions. At a time when many extra work-

<sup>12</sup>Only 19.7 per cent of the regular and .1 per cent of the extra store employees were found by the Minimum Wage Commission to be employed for 12 months of the year. Second Annual Report of the Minimum Wage Commission of Massachusetts, (124, 134).

<sup>13</sup>Nearly 60 per cent (58.2) of the extras served but one month of the year, *Ibid.*, 134.

ers are demanded, there is a temptation to abandon factory for store work. The latter is attractive, as the surroundings are agreeable, and the associations are apt to suggest greater personal dignity and refinement. There is always the hope of working into a regular position. The coming and going of seasonal workers are the occasions also of promotion from less to more desirable store employment. The higher type stores, particularly those dealing in clothing, require experienced employees, who are enticed from suburban employers or less promising positions in neighboring stores by offers of better wages or conditions of work.

#### *Reasons for Shifting*

Reasons why young persons employed in stores changed their positions were given in the verified application forms, in the schedules obtained by personal interviews with extreme shifters or their relatives, and in the employment records of firms to whom our sample group had been certificated. These explanations of changes may be roughly classified as (1) firm reasons, or those in which the employers took the initiative, including temporary employment, reduction in the force, inefficiency, discharges, and firm failures or reorganizations; and (2) personal reasons or those for which the young persons were responsible, such as dissatisfaction with conditions, another position, return to school, sickness, marriage, leaving the city, and needed at home. The responsibility for the 788 changes reported by the three sources of information rested somewhat more heavily on the young persons than on their employers, as there were 354 or 45 per cent of firm and 434 or 55 per cent of personal reasons for leaving positions (Table 3). An analysis of the reported explanations of the shifting of young store workers shows that the larger groups combine behind two main causes for changes of employers, namely, (1) variations in the amount of business resulting in differences in the numbers of employees required to serve the public, causing over one-third of the changes reported; and (2) shifting by the young workers in the expectation of finding positions with better wages or conditions of employment,

TABLE 8. REASONS FOR LEAVING STORE AND SELLING POSITIONS AS SHOWN BY 222 APPLICATION FORMS, 28 PERSONAL INTERVIEWS AND 328 EMPLOYERS RECORDS

Reasons	Reasons for Leaving				Reported by			
	Total	No.	Application Forms	Personal Interviews	Employer's Records			
Total, .....	788	100.	327	100.	79	100.	382	100.
Firm reasons, .....	354	44.9	144	44.0	43	54.5	167	43.7
Temporary or extra worker, <sup>14</sup>	142	18.0	92	28.1	30	38.0	20	5.3
Reduction in force, <sup>14</sup>	128	16.3	35	10.7	6	7.6	87	22.8
Inefficient, .....	29	3.7	..	..	..	..	29	7.6
Discharged, .....	24	3.0	4	1.2	..	..	20	5.2
Miscellaneous, <sup>15</sup> .....	31	3.9	13	4.0	7	8.9	11	2.9
Personal reasons, .....	434	55.1	183	56.0	36	45.5	215	56.3
Dissatisfied, .....	101	12.8	72	22.1	19	24.0	10	2.6
Another position, .....	98	12.5	87	11.3	4	5.1	57	14.9
"Resigned," .....	67	8.5	..	..	..	..	67	17.6
Vacation work, .....	63	8.0	41	12.5	5	6.3	17	4.4
Sickness, .....	34	4.3	13	4.0	3	3.8	18	4.7
Married, .....	25	3.2	..	..	3	3.8	22	5.8
Left city, .....	23	2.9	12	3.7	2	2.5	9	2.4
Needed at home, .....	15	1.9	8	2.4	..	..	7	1.8
Miscellaneous, <sup>16</sup> .....	8	1.0	..	..	..	..	8	2.1

which prompted about one-fourth of the changes reported.<sup>17</sup> In other words, the excessive shifting of store workers is due to seasonal differences in the business of retail selling, to the failure to standardize conditions of employment for the young, and to their lack of outlook, or of definite lines of promotion in the employing firms.

It is noticeable that in the employers' records but 5 per cent were reported as "discharged," and 8 per cent were considered "inefficient." Quite naturally the young people failed to emphasize these reasons for changes of employment. It is evident also that the reports of "resigned" and "another position" in the employers' records often mask dissatisfaction, as there is a drop of over 20 per cent in this cause of change between the reports of the young persons and of their employers.

#### *Educational Significance of Shifting*

The complexity of the causes and routes of shifting between positions by young store workers gives the subject varied

<sup>14</sup>Discharge of employees who ranked as regulars rather than as temporary or extra workers.

<sup>15</sup>Firm failure, 17; firm reorganization, 9; unsatisfactory references, 5.

<sup>16</sup>Dead, 1; not returned from vacation, 6; strike, 1.

<sup>17</sup>If we add those who "resigned" to the "dissatisfaction" and "another position" groups, then this will be one-third of the entire group of reasons.

significance for those interested in developing our vocational education program. Their first questions will deal with the reduction in the amount of shifting, since it is evident that the irregularity of employment of a large portion of the store workers must prove demoralizing to their vocational interests, and must imperil the physical or even moral welfare of women who are dependent on their own earnings for support. Differences between establishments in the fluctuations of employment are evidence of the possibilities of reduction of losses by care in store organization. The study of seasonal variations in employment among 6,449 regular store workers made by the Massachusetts Minimum Wage Commission<sup>18</sup> shows that in 22 large retail stores the percentages employed for 12 months varied from 3.4 to 71.4; for 11 months the range was 8.3 per cent to 80 per cent; for 10 months, 24.2 to 90 per cent. Seven establishments or about one-third did not employ half of their regular workers for nine months of the year.

Several Boston stores have increased the amount of employment offered their seasonal workers by training them to serve as extras in departments subject to rush seasons. Millinery and alteration workroom employees have the shortest working season, as only 4 to 6 per cent are retained for 12 months of the year. The plans of one large Boston store whereby these women are trained to serve as extra sales-women during the Christmas rush should be more generally adopted. When stores have educational directors or when part-time training classes are available to give greater versatility to store employees, many such adjustments are possible.

Vocational guidance and employment management officials should seek to organize a force of extra employees who will not be injured by the seasonal character of the work. Young persons enrolled in high school classes in salesmanship or in other commercial courses should be enlisted for the Christmas and Easter rush of business. Students are glad to earn the extra money and the experience gives valuable preparation

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<sup>18</sup>Wages of Women in Retail Stores in Massachusetts, Bulletin No. 6, (1915), Minimum Wage Commission, p. 41.

for business positions. Many of the office workers in large stores have served behind the counters. School calendars easily could be adjusted so that a large extra force would be available. The general adoption of such a policy, under suitable supervision by educators, might do much to overcome certain social prejudices which prevent young persons choosing store work as a permanent vocation.

Married women often can be utilized as part-time or extra workers without social injury. With a little care in organization it would be easy for two or more such women to co-operate in the discharge of home duties and the work of a store position. Experiments with this combination service have been made by some Philadelphia stores. Twenty per cent of the extras visited in the course of the Federal investigation of 1914 were wives who chose this means of supplementing the family income. Experienced saleswomen who have married may be glad to do part-time work in order to supplement their family incomes or to earn money for special purposes.

Standardization of wages and conditions of employment would reduce the one-fourth to one-third of the shifting which was prompted by the dissatisfaction of the store workers. Young persons are educated in large groups in our public schools, and so establish personal ties which result in the rapid spread of information about conditions of employment. Agreeable surroundings, courteous treatment, paid vacations, employee's associations and other ways of promoting comfort and self-respect are all means of attracting the better and more experienced workers. Since 90 per cent of the store workers are members of family groups, there is a general willingness to take the chances involved in abandoning a disagreeable regular position to serve as an extra in a store offering better conditions or hope of advancement.

When unnecessary or undesirable shifting has been eliminated, there will remain a minimum tendency to change, which has both educational and vocational advantages. For centuries the year of wandering was considered a necessary part of the training of a master craftsman, and young persons may learn different store organizations and policies by varying

their places of service. The making of new personal adjustments and learning of new stocks are often morally and mentally stimulating. The number of desirable openings are limited and vocational guidance and placement officials should be prepared to recommend promising candidates who could shift from one employer to another without prejudicing their vocational standing. Versatility and mobility are desirable characteristics for members of communities subject to many social and economic changes. We must conclude that, while shifting is expensive<sup>10</sup> for the employers and results in wage losses and irregularity of employment for wage-earners, it is not an unmixed evil, as it enables the young workers to learn at first hand the characteristics of their complex economic environment, makes possible the discovery of the positions to which they are best adapted, and assists in promoting better wages and conditions of work by leaving the stupid, crude and lazy workers with the bad employers.

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<sup>10</sup>The educational director of a large department store estimates that it costs \$50 to select and install a new employee.

## CHAPTER VI

### TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT IN RETAIL STORES

#### *Introduction*

There are three opportunities for giving juveniles training which will promote their success in store occupations, each of which demands a different point of view and type of instruction.

*First.* Anticipation of qualifications which will be needed by young persons who enter mercantile establishments may lead to a refocusing or variation in the emphasis placed on subjects and forms of training usually given in elementary schools.

*Second.* Special training for store service should be a part of the work planned for continuation schools and for secondary schools giving vocational courses.

*Third.* There are many forms of store training which can be given most effectively at the places of employment.

#### TRAINING IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

When the question, "What qualifications are of greatest importance in promoting success in store positions?" was raised at a recent meeting of persons engaged in training store employees, it was agreed unanimously that personal characteristics are of much greater importance than technical knowledge. The comments of store officials quoted in previous chapters also reflect this feeling of the importance of social relations or of the ability to make pleasing impressions and to maintain sympathetic and harmonious relations with customers and fellow workers. Physical characteristics, or reliable health resulting in energy and capacity for continuous application to work, were other factors recognized as indispensable for success. These qualifications promote success in many walks of life, so that this evidence of their value in an important field of vocational activities simply reinforces the

generally accepted policy of promoting their cultivation as a part of all educational activities.

### *Social Relations*

Courteous manners, dainty personal habits, low-pitched voices, correct and fluent speech and a sympathetic disposition are acquired chiefly through heredity and home environment, yet it is possible for the school to assist in their development. Since children acquire these pleasing personal traits by imitation rather than by any definite course of training, this form of vocational education can be promoted by giving them teachers whose voices, manners and social outlooks are worthy of imitation. The various forms of group activities and the self-governing schemes which are being introduced in the more progressive schools are useful for accustoming the young to harmonious co-operation with fellow workers. Properly supervised play is another means of teaching the balancing of intense personal activity with a just recognition of the right of associates.

Educators should present less sordid motives for the cultivation of courtesy than those commonly suggested in the literature of salesmanship found in the trade journals. Innumerable anecdotes are published telling of how salespeople met rudeness with patient sweetness, dealt kindly with customers who were crotchety and exacting, showed a sympathetic interest in family problems or bestowed extravagant admiration on quite ordinary children. Instead of ending with the traditional "and they lived happily ever after" of the fairy tales, such stories are apt to close with assurances of commissions on large bills of goods ordered through the salespersons of gracious manners. A sympathetic interest in persons of varying social standards, slowness in resenting the ill-bred conduct of companions, pride in retaining self-control under provocation and an eager willingness to be of service are expressions in business life of gentle manners, Christian charity and unselfish devotion:—time honored ideals which are capable of presentation in ways that will stir the finer emotions of the young, and whose realization will bring the more idealistic rewards of gains in personal dignity and in spiritual satisfaction.

*Physical Development*

The physical examination of the young men registered in the recent draft revealed that over a third were unfit for service in the army. The ill-health found among the women employees of the Boston stores indicates that their sisters are equally incapable of meeting successfully the obligations of their lives. Weaknesses peculiar to women were the most frequent complaints treated in the store clinics. No doubt high-heeled shoes, unhealthful clothing and lack of muscular development often aggravate difficulties which are inevitable when women stand continuously. American educators already are committed to a program which demands that the foundations for vigorous health shall be laid during the early years of school life by the medical examination and supervision of the children, so that defects can be discovered promptly and corrected before they become chronic. Care of the eyes and teeth, the enforcement of well-balanced diets and healthful school-room postures, the teaching of hygienic personal habits and the insistence on good ventilation and vigorous out-door exercise are generally accepted as necessary means of promoting the physical fitness needed in whatever vocation is entered in later years.<sup>1</sup>

*Refocusing of Elementary Branches*

The high proportions of adolescents and of adults who choose retail selling as a vocation justifies an increase of emphasis, if not a definite refocusing of certain other phases of the common school branches. Geography, history, arithmetic and penmanship are all subjects which may make important contributions to the preparation of young persons who undertake store work. No reorganization of the school courses in the interests of vocational education would be necessary. It is suggested merely that teachers be given a clear understanding of possible future applications of their work so that they may relate the conventional subjects more intimately to the local social environment, and may increase interest by suggesting the contributions which the school

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<sup>1</sup>Data showing the maladies treated in the medical departments of Boston stores are given in Appendix I, Table 5, p. 121.

studies make to success in the wage-earning activities of later years.

*Local Geography.* The first instruction in geography usually undertakes to give children a knowledge of the topography and routes of travel of their immediate environment. A thorough and pedagogically-sound handling of these subjects would do much to increase the usefulness of young persons in many of the positions which they commonly fill. The making and study of maps of the city, a knowledge of the names and directions of the principal streets, the locations of public buildings, the means of transportation, and the chief business centers is of practical value for all residents of the community and of great interest to children of the elementary school age. The logical unfolding of the subject would lead next to a study of suburbs and neighboring towns, and of their means of travel and transportation. Children should learn not only the names, locations and directions of streets, suburbs and neighboring towns, but also the correct spelling of all words used in writing addresses. Imaginary journeys, the following and giving of directions necessary for reaching given points are attractive and effective means of training. Pin and tape maps such as are common in the graphic presentation of statistical data will add interest to the exercises. It is unnecessary to remind modern educators that a free use of pictures, observations from elevated points, and as many excursions as are practicable, will promote the interest and effectiveness of such instruction in local geography.

Elementary economic or commercial geography which receives attention at later stages of the school course might make important contribution to the vocational training of mercantile workers. Production maps and outlines of the routes of commerce are commonly used in teaching the sources from which are drawn the varied supplies which stores retail for use in meeting the daily needs of their customers. The stimulation of the imagination so that the daily round of activities will not prove deadening to the intelligence is one of the important aims of vocational education. Stocking the child's

mind with vivid pictures of the countries and people associated with the varied wares handled in stores will prevent the earlier routine occupations destroying the mental traits needed for the more advanced forms of mercantile service.

*Economic History.* Elementary economic history renders a similar service to young store workers. It enables them to picture the long struggle by which the race has learned to draw from the natural environment and adapt to human needs the varied commodities which are offered to customers. The complex organization of modern commercial activities is more easily understood when approached from the historical standpoint, and a less prejudiced and more hopeful attitude in dealing with labor problems results from a realization of the gains that have been made in the past, and the difficulties and dangers of social revolutions.

*Arithmetic.* Rapidity and accuracy in simple arithmetical calculations rather than a knowledge of more technical processes are the requirements of mercantile occupations. Thorough drill in calculating costs of articles, particularly those requiring a free use of fractions or percentages, would be of use to persons anticipating positions as retail salespeople. Token money could be used to give practice in the rapid calculating and giving of change. Interest would be added to the work if the children were encouraged to collect the sales slips which come home in packages of merchandise. The recalculating or auditing of these lists of groceries or dry goods actually purchased for use in their homes would supply attractive exercises in arithmetic and might encourage helpful considerations of family budgets.<sup>2</sup>

*Penmanship.* Rapidity and legibility are the two qualities desired in mercantile handwriting. Some stores require that the first letters of proper names shall be printed. A large, sprawling handwriting is objectionable both for sales slips and bookkeeping, so that the smaller, more compact forms of script should be cultivated in the upper elementary grades.

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<sup>2</sup>See "Outlines of a Course in Store Arithmetic," Appendix D, Bulletin 22, *Retail Selling*, Federal Board for Vocational Education.

COURSES OF TRAINING FOR STORE SERVICE IN CONTINUATION AND  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS<sup>8</sup>*Continuation School Courses*

As the name suggests, the continuation school courses must supplement the training received while in full-time attendance. Wage-earning children 14 to 16 years old are required to attend the Boston classes four hours each week. Our study of the store occupations open to children of these ages shows that they are employed chiefly as bundlers, messengers and stock workers. What can be done to supplement their defective preparation and to promote an early escape from the simple, poorly paid occupations to positions which offer better chances for development?

The future of these children in store service is precarious, not merely because of their defective training, but because the reasons for leaving school also are causes which may disqualify them for great success in store work. Their premature abandonment of school life usually means one of three things: (1) either they became dissatisfied with school because of inability to get along with their teachers or fellow students; or (2) they failed in their lessons, fell behind their grades and left because of discouragement; or (3) they were obliged to leave school because economic pressure in their homes made it necessary for them to contribute to family incomes. Young people unable or unwilling to make the social adjustments of the school room are not adapted to the complex social requirements of a store, and the failure or unwillingness to apply themselves to elementary school studies may have left them deficient in arithmetic, spelling and penmanship, so that they are disqualified for all but a few store occupations. The personal habits and social outlooks of children reared in impoverished homes often prove to be handicaps which it is difficult but not entirely impossible to overcome.

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<sup>8</sup>A condensed summary of methods of organization and subjects covered in such courses is given in order to round out the discussions of the present bulletin. Detailed plans and topical outlines are given in the bulletin on *Retail Selling*, prepared by Mrs. Lucinda W. Prince and published by the Federal Board for Vocational Education.

**CONTENT OF CONTINUATION SCHOOL COURSES FOR STORE EMPLOYEES  
OF 14 TO 16 YEARS OLD**

The continuation school courses for younger store employees should endeavor to overcome the defective mental, personal and social training of children with little education. Courses supplementing their limited schooling, or what are commonly known as "general improvement classes" seem the most suitable subjects of instruction, but the interest and effectiveness of the classroom work would be increased if special efforts were made to relate it closely to daily vocational experiences.

As already suggested, children of this age are employed in retail stores as bundlers or messengers, and in simpler form of stock work. The next positions ahead are those of cashier, auditor and selling from one-price counters or in basement departments. Training in accurate and rapid calculations of the costs of bills of goods and the amounts of change due customers would have vocational value. Discussions of the store systems or plans of organization of their places of employment also would be useful. Reviews of their work in elementary geography and history which will emphasize the sources from which merchandise is drawn and the simple aspects of the history of industry and commerce related to their work would assist in preparing a background for later training in a knowledge of the merchandise.

Special attention should be given to correcting faulty physical or personal traits, and to giving training in manners and morals, since desirable habits which contribute much to future success are more easily established in younger employees who are at the beginning of their mercantile careers. Records of juvenile courts prove petty larceny to be the most common offense of children of this age. A great store is a somewhat impersonal owner of the wonderful collections of attractive goods which tempt young persons who come from homes with meager incomes, so that special efforts are needed to develop the strict honesty which is an indispensable requirement for all store employees. Insistence on personal cleanliness, and on neatness of dress, gives less offense at this age than in later

years, and something may be done to correct boisterous or vulgar manners and unpleasant habits of speech.

Younger stock workers serve as markers or wait on experienced stock or sales people, but they may soon be assigned more responsible duties. Training in the proper care of ready-made clothing, as the buttoning before placing on hang-ers, and the folding or boxing in the approved manner of those garments kept in stocks, should be given. The sewing on of labels, and the simpler repairs such as tightening buttons or braids, also fall to stock workers.

Orderly habits or the devising and maintaining of plans for arranging their desks or counters should be taught. Since continuation school teachers are permitted to observe their pupils at the places of employment, it would not be difficult to make note of all disorderly tendencies for which the pupils are responsible, and to discuss them at future sessions of the class. Children of this age must be taught to see the disorder which they could remedy and which may lower the general appearance of the store, cause needless depreciation in the value of the stock and give evidence of the personal inefficiency of the young employee.

Large stores having many juvenile employees sometimes arrange for continuation school classes at the places of em-ployment, or in the classrooms of neighboring stores. Under such circumstances, courses more definitely related to the work undertaken by the children may be planned. The teaching of store system is greatly simplified, since it is necessary merely to acquaint the pupils with the organization of their own places of employment. A closer classification of the students by occupations is possible, and conferences with their superior officers will enable the teacher to direct her efforts to the cor-rection of faults or giving training which will fit more exactly the vocational situations of her young charges. Frequent conferences and close co-operation with the store officials in charge of the training of juvenile employees is of course a necessary part of the activities of teachers of continuation school classes.

## TRAINING FOR STORE SERVICE GIVEN IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

*Secondary Education Desirable for Store Employees*

The Boston store which has given the most careful attention to the selection and training of its personnel has announced that its new employees must be graduates of secondary schools. In our study of occupational distribution and qualifications we have shown the high proportion of young persons with secondary school training\* in the important store occupations, and the increasing tendency to adopt forms of store organization which will lessen the use of child labor.<sup>5</sup> The development of public opinion and of legislation enforcing a minimum living wage also are factors contributing to the elimination from store employment of young, poorly-educated workers. When such standards are maintained for the regular employees of a store, it is difficult to secure opportunities for practice in the more skilled store occupations for young persons of less training and maturity than those of the third and fourth years of secondary schools.<sup>6</sup>

*Obtaining Store Experience*

This practical experience is an indispensable part of any sound course of training in retail selling. Fortunately, it is possible to organize practice work in department, dry-goods and clothing stores so that it will be a convenience rather than an annoyance to co-operating merchants. Great variations in the numbers of customers during the hours of the day, the days of the week and the months of the year result in seasonal demands for extra workers. A partially instructed and supervised group of intelligent young persons is a more satisfactory extra force than that which usually can be gathered by commercial agencies for supplying new employees. A secondary teacher in charge of students preparing for store

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\*Charts II and III, Chapter IV.

<sup>5</sup>Pages 36-38; 57-59.

<sup>6</sup>"In the opinion of those who have made a careful study of the whole subject of training for store service, the place for such a course is clearly the third and fourth year of the high schools, and it is further believed that it should be offered as a part of a well-organized commercial department."—Mrs. Lucinda W. Prince, in *Retail Selling*, Bulletin No. 22, Federal Board for Vocational Education.

service may obtain opportunities for practice during busy hours of the day or during the noon-time absence of regular employees; she may be able to place her students in stores as a part of the extra force needed on Saturday and Monday; she is sure of many opportunities for two weeks or more of steady employment during the Christmas rush of business, and may also find positions giving a week or more of extra service during the busy season of the spring.

#### *Details of Co-operation*

The terms of this co-operation between local merchants and persons in charge of the training of high school students should be determined in conferences between the store managers and school officials. It is essential that there be uniform standards in order to avoid difficulties in arranging the distribution of the students so that their experiences will have the desired educational value. The merchants should agree to pay uniform hourly or daily rates for the services of the student extras, and the teachers should prepare a program of practice work which will insure varied and helpful store experiences for all the students. It is claimed that store practice should be credited in the student's high school course since it is comparable to the laboratory work in the natural sciences. With skillful teaching it can be given an education value which may justify such recognition.\*

#### *Failure to Enter Store Service After Receiving Training*

Puzzling educational problems have been raised in Boston by the fact that the high school course in salesmanship is taken by many students who make no vocational use of their training. For the two years, 1916-1917, there were 368 high school graduates who had received training in the salesmanship classes, but only 37 took selling positions, and 73 enlisted in other forms of store service, giving a total of 110 or 30 per cent who made use of their vocational training. Two explanations have been found for this situation: The salesmanship courses are popular with students because they afford opportunities to

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\*Details of plans for co-operation with stores are given in Bulletin No. 22, on *Retail Selling*, pp. 18-31, 37-40.

earn money which helps pay expenses or supplies means for buying extra clothing desired by girls of high school ages. The work behind the counter is undertaken willingly when it is a part of the high school course. When the young persons apply for regular positions, the store managers may find it difficult to employ them as full-time salespeople, and there may be unwillingness to accept the less attractive work of a cashier or stock worker. It is true also that the office positions which were sought by the majority (68.7 per cent) of those who had been in the salesmanship<sup>6</sup> classes had an average initial weekly wage which was about two dollars higher than that paid in the store positions.

#### GENERAL EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF TRAINING IN SALESMANSHIP

When well organized and followed up with effective classroom exercises, the practice work in retail selling has general educational value for secondary school students. It may promote a democratic point of view and sympathetic understanding of those who serve them when they become purchasers. Efforts to meet customers in a courteous and sympathetic way, and the necessity of working effectively and harmoniously with a group which is discharging an essential social service, are useful disciplines for young people. The training gives a point of view which would be helpful in many other business positions. It is true also that the money earned by store service may be the means of enabling some students to meet the expenses of their last years of schooling. We conclude that the failure to utilize fully this vocational training does not involve any waste of educational effort.

#### NEED OF STANDARDIZATION OF WAGES OF ADOLESCENTS

In the course of the present investigation we have repeatedly found evidence of the need of standardization of the wages of adolescents. At present a difference of fifty cents—

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<sup>6</sup>In some cases store positions were taken temporarily, as many were unable to obtain the desired office positions immediately after graduation and so were obliged to accept other work. The percentage distribution of the total positions held during the first year after graduation was: stores, 28.4; offices, 70.6. Fifty-seven reported no wage-earning occupation.

or even less—per week in the wage offered will tempt a young person to shift from one employer to another. The efforts of vocational guidance experts to place juveniles in positions which will lead to useful careers in occupations for which they are fitted are nullified by fluctuations in wages which have no other basis than the immediate needs of an employer, who is obtaining slightly skilled service in a competitive and entirely unorganized labor market. Had the wages paid store employees compared more favorably with those of other adolescent workers of the same ages and training, there would have been a greater willingness to undertake the store work for which training had been provided.

Workers in the British Juvenile Labor Exchanges have adopted the following plans for promoting favorable standards of employment:

Preference is given always to employers offering good wages and conditions of work. This often results in failure to fill the orders or the sending of the poorly equipped workers to unsatisfactory employers. Complaints pave the way for the calling of conferences of groups of employers whose conditions of work or wages are lower than the standards desired. At such meetings data showing the superior inducements and better results in other establishments may be presented. A leveling up of wages in order to secure equal consideration in the labor market may result.

#### CONTENT OF SECONDARY COURSES IN RETAIL SELLING

##### *Lack of Standardization*

The lack of standardization in store organization and practices makes it difficult to outline in any detailed way the instruction which should be embodied in a secondary course for training store employees. Obviously the duties assigned employees in the general merchandise store of a city of ten to fifty thousand must vary radically from those of a metropolitan store having several thousand on the pay-roll. It is impossible at present to give definite content to the common terms used in speaking of store activities; thus a marker may be a little girl from the elementary schools who runs a small

machine which attaches tags to merchandise, or may be a responsible, mature, employee who grades the garments and attaches labels giving varied information; and a stock worker may be a high-class errand girl, or an assistant to the selling force of an important department who would rank as a junior saleswoman in another store.

#### *Universal Store Activities*

However, the general processes which we have described in our study of the occupational distribution of the juvenile store employees of Boston must be cared for in all mercantile establishments. There must be plans for receiving, marking and caring for the stock; there must be an organized selling force, supervised so that their relations with each other and with the public will be harmonious and efficient; the calculating of charges and making of change always require means of checking errors or dishonesty, and all stores must have records which will make possible systematic accounting; the delivery of goods to purchasers is common if not universal; the plant must be kept in a cleanly and attractive condition, heated and protected from fire and burglars; and means must be developed for attracting the public, through newspaper advertising, artistic window displays, music or other ingenious devices. How is the public-school supervisor of instruction in retail selling to go about determining just how these varied duties are apportioned in the local mercantile establishments in which her pupils will be employed? It is equally important for her to be able to avoid conflicting and confusing instruction which will result when the standards of performance of store service set by the school vary from those of store executives.

#### *Standardization of Local Store Practices*

The process by which the educational director of a large Boston establishment has standardized the tasks of the store would be applicable on a larger or smaller scale to the community which is served by a secondary school course in retail selling. A preliminary study of a particular branch of store work is made so that a tentative plan can be outlined as a basis

for discussion. A member of the educational staff of this store makes this study while serving as a regular worker in the branch of store service whose activities are in need of standardization. Educational directors without such assistance might make use of their own observations or of the reports of experiences of students engaged in store work in order to summarize the business practices best adapted to local conditions. When a tentative plan has been developed a meeting of persons engaged in the particular branch of store work under consideration should be called. The persons most familiar with the store occupation, that is, *those who do it*, should bring their experience to bear on the task of formulating a statement or job analysis which will embody what the group accepts as the most efficient method of accomplishing the given task. In the Boston store which uses this method of enlisting the interest and initiative of employees, the supervisor responsible for enforcing the standards agreed upon in the conference is sometimes chosen by the group of interested employees. Educational directors and store executives might take part in the discussions of such conferences, but since the young apprentice learns chiefly from fellow workers, the participation in person or by means of representatives of the rank and file of the store employees is an essential part of any educational activities aimed at standardizing the mercantile practice of the community. If the local situation permitted such a democratic and efficient process of establishing standards, the teacher of retail selling soon would formulate a body of information which would be of great value both to the school and to store executives.

When the co-operation with local merchants necessary for formulating such an authoritative statement of the duties of different store occupations cannot be procured, then the educational director must make the store experiences of her pupils and her own observations during follow-up visits the basis of the classroom instruction dealing with store organization and activities. The different methods of receiving and marking stock may be compared for the purpose of discovering common aims and deciding which come nearest to meeting good

business requirements. Observations of means by which different kinds of stock may be kept in the best possible condition may be reported and discussed. References to helpful suggestions in text books may be read and their recommendations tested during store practice. Collections of sales slips could be made and studied for the purpose of discovering points of resemblance or difference. By such activities the pupils can be given an intelligent grasp of local store practices and taught to discriminate between efficient and slovenly business methods. They should be cautioned, however, to avoid giving offense by indulging in presumptuous criticisms while doing practice work in less progressive stores.

#### TRAINING IN SALESMANSHIP

##### *Importance for Vocational Education*

The meeting of customers for the sale of merchandise is the focusing point of the varied activities of every type of store. Whether viewed from the standpoint of the business interest of the employer, or from that of the vocational advancement of the employee, training which will increase skill in selling usually is regarded as the most important phase of vocational education of persons engaged in store service. Expert selection and care of stock, ingenious advertising schemes, impressive and beautifully equipped buildings and skillful plans of financing lose their potency when they supplement the activities of a crude and inefficient force of salespeople. On the other hand, employees who have large sales books to their credit do not find it difficult to obtain the recognition as business assets which leads to increases in wages, or promotions to more responsible positions.

##### *Two Parts of Training in Salesmanship*

The retail salesperson needs two kinds of training in order to qualify for the maximum capacity for service: (1) He should have a thorough knowledge of his merchandise. This means not merely the acquisition of a few "selling points" with which to bait customers, but such information as will make possible an intelligent interest in the processes by which

the goods have been produced, and the ability to give the customer sound advice about the selection, use and care of what he purchases; (2) The salesperson should be trained in the best methods of discovering and supplying the needs of customers. Great variations in the commodities dealt with do not prevent the recognition of processes common to all forms of retail selling, and customers have enough in common to permit classification and the formulation of general plans suitable for dealing with different types of buyers.

#### *Knowledge of Merchandise Gained in Secondary School Courses*

The more detailed knowledge of the merchandise cannot be given in the training courses of secondary schools. The practice work of the students will acquaint them with greatly diversified stocks of goods, so that instruction fitted to the experiences of one group of students will have little application to those of another. In the secondary schools, as in the elementary, some shifting of emphasis in courses commonly offered would assist in supplying a background of knowledge useful both to consumers and distributors of the commodities which contribute to comfort in the daily life of civilized people. The study of textiles and of elementary principles of costume designing and of household decoration belongs primarily in the domestic arts courses. This is true also of the instruction dealing with foods and household equipment. The teacher of salesmanship should be responsible merely for reviewing, extending, and making a somewhat different application of what has been acquired from these other parts of the high school course. The training which will give historical perspective and a knowledge of spoken and written English also must be given chiefly in the general courses dealing with these subjects, but as in the elementary schools, there are opportunities for correlation with important vocational interests.\*

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\*A syllabus outlining work suitable for a secondary school course in retail selling is given in Syllabus A, of Bulletin No. 22, on *Retail Selling*, Federal Board of for Vocational Education.

*Class Reports on Merchandise*

Interest in discovering as much as possible about the merchandise handled and acquaintance with means by which such knowledge may be obtained are two services which can be rendered in a secondary school course dealing with retail selling. Descriptions by pupils of the goods sold in departments where they do practice work will have the double value of acquainting fellow students with varied stocks and of promoting the acquiring of a store vocabulary. Pupils should be taught to discover information in trade journals, periodical literature and manufacturers' reports, and could easily be interested in making collections of clippings or pamphlets which might be the beginning of the equipment of an expert. Since so high a proportion of the secondary students do not make practical use of the training in salesmanship, intelligent vocational interest and ability in locating desired information are as important aims as facility in specific store occupations.<sup>10</sup>

*Meeting Customers*

Confusion and embarrassment would be likely to result from efforts to acquaint students of secondary school age with the elaborate discussions of the psychology of salesmanship, and with means for recognizing and classifying the different types of customers. Simple and concrete instruction by means of demonstration sales, and the discussion of the experiences met with in the course of their practice work are the methods found satisfactory by persons who have had successful experience in dealing with juvenile salespeople.<sup>11</sup> Details of subjects suitable for discussion will be found in the Bulletin on *Retail Selling*<sup>12</sup> and in the outline of plans for training salespeople of the ready-made clothing department, given in Appendix II, of this Bulletin.

The development of a strictly impersonal point of view is one of the chief benefits to be derived from training in sales-

<sup>10</sup>A classified list of books and periodicals which will supply such information is given in Appendix II, pp. 133-138.

<sup>11</sup>Norton, Helen Rich, *Department-Store Education*, pp. 17-19, tells of methods of conducting a demonstration sale—Bulletin, 1917, No. 9, Bureau of Education.

<sup>12</sup>Bulletin No. 22, Federal Board for Vocational Education.

manship. The young person learns to forget himself in the enthusiastic efforts to meet fully the requirements of his job. All of his powers are enlisted in the rendering of a social and business service. The unpleasant manners of an arrogant customer are overlooked when attention is focused on the efforts to discover just what is wanted and to supply this or a satisfactory substitute from the stock. There is an element of sportsmanship in such encounters, during which efforts are made to grasp quickly and satisfy fully the desires of the varied types of customers who come to the counters of a great store.

#### *Training Given Regular Employees*

Training given to persons holding positions is the most significant and satisfactory form of vocational education in retail selling as in many other fields of employment. The organization of such training must vary with local conditions. In small places the public school director of instruction in retail selling could organize part-time classes for junior employees, meeting during business hours, and could arrange short unit courses for older workers which might meet during business hours in dull months or in the evenings of busier seasons. A well-organized educational department is gaining recognition as an indispensable means of insuring the efficiency of the employees of large stores.<sup>13</sup> The varied activities which have been developed by the gifted and experienced educational directors of the Boston stores will prove suggestive to persons undertaking this new and important form of store service.<sup>14</sup>

#### *New or Juvenile Employees*

Much needless waste and annoyance accompanied the older methods of starting new employees in their store positions. Failure to give complete instruction resulted in errors, and weeks often passed before the new worker became familiar

<sup>13</sup>Mrs. Prince gives a list of 58 stores located in all parts of the country which maintain educational work, Bulletin No. 22, *Retail Selling*, 89-90.

<sup>14</sup>This discussion of training workers on the job is largely a summary of the educational activities directed by Miss Bernice M. Cannon of William Filene's Sons Company, Miss Helen R. Norton of R. H. White Company and Miss Mary Hopkins of Jordan Marsh Company.

with the store system and with the stock and organization of her department. The time of high-salaried executives was wasted in giving instruction or making adjustments between new and old employees. Frequently the new employee became discouraged and left just as her services reached a value equal to the training given, and then the entire wasteful performance was repeated. The large Boston stores find it profitable to have an instructor who gives her entire time to the training of new or junior employees, and their educational departments are making special studies for the purpose of standardizing and reducing the costs of this instruction.

#### REDUCING THE COST OF NEW EMPLOYEES

The cost of starting a new employee in a store position in Boston is estimated to be fifty to two hundred dollars. Training may be short and inexpensive when the position is one where the tasks are simple, and the loss in efficiency or interruption of the work of other members of the department may be slight. The expense is much greater when the employment department makes special investigations of fitness, when store executives co-operate in the training, and when the work of highly paid store employees is interrupted or decreased in efficiency during the period of change. The educational director of one Boston store who is making a special study of the cost of training new employees suggests two methods of economy: (1) Whenever it is possible, the giving of instruction should be the work of the educational department or of the less highly paid employees; (2) Printed instructions may assist in the training as soon as the chief store tasks have been standardized.

#### INSURING A CORDIAL RECEPTION OF THE NEW EMPLOYEE

An interesting "sponsor" system for the purpose of welcoming new employees has been developed in one store. Such cases as this were common: A saleswoman applied for a position, and was interviewed by the officials of the employment office, who had her credentials carefully investigated. After acceptance as a suitable candidate for employment,

training was given in the store system and in the duties of the position for which she was selected. These activities cost the store about fifty dollars. When she took her place behind the counter, the other saleswomen treated her in a cold and haughty manner. Such a reception may be due to a reluctance to share in commissions, or to some social inferiority attributed to the newcomer. The result usually is a notice at the end of the week that the newcomer does not like the place and another person must be found and trained for the position.

The aim of the sponsor system is defined as: "To instill the \_\_\_\_\_ store spirit in new employees by helping them in every way to understand the rules and policies of the store." The sponsor in each department welcomes and assists the newcomer; she introduces her to the buyer and other members of the department, and informs her about the location of various conveniences supplied for store employees; she relieves the education department of some of the instruction about the location and methods of caring for the stock, and explains any features of the store system which have been imperfectly understood. Thus the new employee is brought quickly to a consciousness of full membership in the store force and of ability to succeed in the work of her department.

#### *Training for Special Services*

An important part of the work of the education department of a store is the training of a contingent force to be used as extras during busy seasons or when the store anticipates an important special sale. As already suggested,<sup>15</sup> these workers may be drawn from other departments which will not be busy during the seasons when the extra selling force is needed. Girls from the high school salesmanship classes may be given training which will enable them to understand more fully the policies peculiar to the store. Former saleswomen who have married, but who will gladly accept temporary employment, may be brought back for the instruction which will acquaint them with the changes in store system and the selling points of new stocks. Such preparation makes possible an extra

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<sup>15</sup>Chapter V, p. 79.

force which can deal with the rush of business of a busy season without friction or confusion and with a minimum of those losses which result from the errors of new employees.

The educational director may co-operate in training and organizing the regular employees so that emergency needs can be met without engaging new, temporary workers. This is highly desirable since a rapid increase in the cost of store labor has been brought about by the scarcity of workers, the enforcement of minimum wage decrees, the general rise in wages made necessary by the increased cost of living and the desire of store executives to compete successfully with other employers in obtaining the young people of superior natural ability and good education. Readily accessible information about the personal capacities of all employees is one method of promoting this economical use of the regular store force. Personnel or employment managers find it desirable to record carefully the lines of work in which each person is proficient. When properly indexed such personal histories often make possible the prompt filling of unexpected vacancies, or the organization of a force of extra workers, by the shifting of regular employees from departments which are not particularly busy. Workers who have had some experience with the stocks to be sold and who are familiar with the store system may be trained quickly to serve efficiently as substitutes for absent workers, or to handle goods offered in special sales. This policy of shifting regular rather than of hiring part-time, extra workers often promotes business conditions which are desirable both for employer and employee.

Advertising campaigns often bring better results when salespeople have been trained to effective co-operation in spreading a knowledge of the opportunities which the store offers its customers and in presenting effectively the goods offered in special sales. Buyers are continually on the lookout for stocks of desirable goods which may be bought at bargain prices. These are special features of well-advertised sales which bring a rush of customers to the store. Salespeople should be familiar with the circumstances which make it possible to offer the merchandise at reduced prices and

should be coached in the presentation of the best selling points of the goods. It is often possible to direct the attention of patrons of such sales to supplies in the general stock which will be useful with the specially priced goods. An alert educational director will call attention to all such opportunities for increasing the business of the store.

#### *Training of the Regular Sales Force*

Educational work with the regular sales force of a large store has three aims: (1) The giving of a thorough knowledge of the stock; (2) Teaching the care of merchandise, so that it will be displayed to advantage and preserved from deterioration; (3) Preparation for giving the best possible service to customers.

(1) Knowledge of the Stock. Young persons who enter store service should have a general knowledge of industrial history and of modern methods of production and distribution, such as has been suggested in our discussion of courses in secondary schools which prepare for mercantile positions. It is difficult for the educational department of a store to supply this cultural background because its instruction must deal chiefly with matters which are of more immediate and direct value in promoting the business of the store. However, opportunities will arise when new stock is being studied for brief reviews of the history of industry, for descriptions of essential processes in the production of staple goods, and for skillfully directed, informal discussions which may be the means of teaching the simpler principles of economics and aesthetics. When interest has been aroused, the more ambitious workers may be stimulated to continue their studies with the help of carefully selected reading lists.

Buyers in Boston stores co-operate systematically with educational directors in giving instruction which will acquaint salespeople with the uses, methods of production and best selling points of new stocks. Such educational activities are a means of promoting the continuous interchange of information between the persons who provide and those who sell the merchandise. Since the buyers meet the manufacturers or their representatives, they pick up much interesting information

about the uses and methods of producing store commodities. The salespeople, on the other hand, are in a position to learn the value placed on the goods by the consumer who is the final judge of their worth. The buyers' knowledge will assist salespeople in efforts to give to the public the best available means of supplying their needs, and the salespersons' information will enable producers and distributors to discover what is needed for the promotion of human comfort and happiness.

(2) Care of Merchandise. Thousands of dollars are lost by large stores because of damage done to goods while they are being offered for sale. Continuous effort is necessary in order to maintain the stock in a fresh and desirable condition. A crude and slovenly arrangement of goods gives them an unattractive appearance and lowers the tone of the store. Great stores usually are clustered in one part of the city and customers pass easily from one place to another. Merchants desiring to attract superior types of customers must study these subtle, psychological effects, as the decisions of customers usually are influenced more by suggestion than by intelligent weighing of the values of merchandise.

The most effective method of promoting good care of stock found in the course of our study of Boston stores has been described in the discussion of methods of standardizing store practices. There should be definite agreements about all the details of stock arrangement and management as otherwise the different workers in a department cannot unite in producing an orderly effect. Boxed stock should be folded correctly and the boxes stacked in a uniform manner, folded stock should be piled on shelves in accordance with a plan definitely agreed upon; hanging garments should all face in one direction; loose buttons, braids and labels should receive prompt attention, and skillful pressing should be provided in order that the fresh appearance expected in new goods may be restored. The tangled confusion of a remnant sale was avoided in one Boston store by rolling each piece of silk in a strip of paper on which the length, width and price of the goods was written. A quickly adjusted rubber band held the rolls which were stacked so that the loose ends of silk easily could be examined by cus-

tomers. In another store shirt waists offered in a special sale were hung on iron framework above the counters with signs showing sizes and prices. They were easily inspected by customers and lost value less rapidly than when heaped in disorderly piles through which each newcomer rooted with the hope that good bargains in her size might be discovered. Other ingenious plans for preserving and improving the appearance of the stock are sure to result when there is an educational director engaged in the systematic focusing of attention on store problems and the tactful enlistment for their solution of the interest and inventiveness of store employees.

(3) Service to Customers. New conceptions of the social significance of service in mercantile establishments are developing as a result of the educational activities and research which are being promoted by groups of progressive employers. The older view that salesmanship is a contest of wits in which the merchant aims at gaining an advantage over the customer has been abandoned by all reputable mercantile establishments. "The customer must be satisfied," is the slogan which is sounded continuously in the literature of salesmanship. The ideal salesperson of a modern store is a person of quick perceptions who meets the customer sympathetically and supplies her promptly with the goods best adapted to her needs. Assistance in selection may be given in a tactful way so that the salesperson may be regarded as an expert in the application of the available resources of production so that maximum benefits shall result from the consumption of wealth.

Training to this new point of view must be a gradual process. It is necessary that the spirit of kindly and intelligent service shall permeate the entire body of store employees, so that each new worker will be subject to the influence of the group psychology. The newer policies which demand the careful selection of persons whose training and personal characters indicate that they may develop into satisfactory co-workers in a great mercantile enterprise, which supply ample educational opportunities so that the ambitious feel assured of satisfactory business careers, which give organizations of employees a share in the control of their conditions of work,

and which assure a just participation in the financial rewards of good service, are all means of promoting good salesmanship at the counters of the store.

The meeting of people is an art which some persons develop more readily than others. Practice in the imitation of satisfactory models may enable the clumsy and bashful to acquire the social graces which are natural gifts for more fortunate companions. The demonstration sale in which successful salespeople go through processes of presenting goods and convincing a reluctant customer of their value is a dramatic and effective means of training inexperienced salespeople. Questions and discussions in the class may bring out all the fine points of such an exercise. Participation as actors or auditors in such sales may promote a professional spirit in salespeople and may result in more uniform standards of service in the departments where they are conducted as a regular part of the store educational activities.

Shoppers are sometimes employed by large stores for the purpose of obtaining an objective view of the store service. These experts come to the salespeople as customers and study carefully the manner in which their supposed needs are supplied. There is danger that this means of improving salesmanship may do more harm than good, as the store employees may regard it as a spy system, but when such reports are used as a basis for kindly, constructive criticism, the salespeople of the store may be benefited. Since such shoppers also visit rival stores, their reports may arouse a spirit of emulation, as comparisons can be made which will stimulate efforts to equal competitors or give a gratifying sense of superiority.

#### TRAINING OF BUYERS<sup>16</sup>

Promotion to the position of buyers is the usual reward for careful attention to salesmanship. Through successful service at the counter the young store workers learn what the consuming public demands; the next stage of their mercantile careers demands a thorough knowledge of the production and

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<sup>16</sup>This discussion of the training of buyers is based largely on extracts from talks given by merchandisers of the Jordan Marsh department store.

wholesale marketing of the commodities sold in the store departments which they serve. Buyers carry greater responsibilities than salespeople as mistaken choice of merchandise may bring the store heavy financial losses. On the other hand their store duties are less monotonous; they frequently are sent to other cities or to Europe to select new stock and so learn more about general business conditions; and exceptional success will qualify them for the important, high-salaried positions of merchandisers or store executives.

The educational director may co-operate with merchandisers in developing effective instruction for assistant buyers and for experienced salespeople who wish to fit themselves for greater responsibilities. The busy merchandisers must first be persuaded to come to the classroom and impart the shrewd business knowledge which they have gained by years of experience in driving good bargains in order to obtain stocks which the public will be eager to buy. A series of suggestive topics or pertinent questions sometimes will stimulate interest in organizing their information so that its educational value will be increased. Assurance of the informality of the conference will overcome the reluctance of men of action to assume the role of pedagogues. Talks by merchandisers may alternate with discussions led by the educational director in which important points will be emphasized and given their concrete applications.

A few extracts from reports of informal talks given by merchandisers of the Jordan Marsh store will show the value and interest of such a course for buyers as has been suggested. Such instructions may be grouped under three general heads: First, means of keeping in touch with the condition and needs of the store stocks for which the buyers are responsible; Second, methods of studying the market and of winning favorable terms from jobbers or manufacturers and their salesmen; Third, store policies in fixing the selling prices of goods.

#### *(1) Knowledge of the Stock*

"The stock must be kept well balanced. When there are no broad plans, success is due merely to spot luck—to hit or miss."

"Analyze your stock. Keep a record of all merchandise purchased. Learn the quality most in demand and the popular price. Maintain an inventory of quality, price and style of goods which you consider desirable for your department and organize a regular budget system. Buy to fill in vacancies. It is well to maintain 'present order' and 'advance order' books."

"Learn to *sense* your trade by consulting salespeople and by waiting on customers and getting comments first hand. Study the want slips." Watch the sale of new merchandise:—if successful, recorder readily."

"The poor selection of unsalable stock has put many a merchant on the rocks. Remember that goods you haven't cause less trouble than goods you have and can't get rid of. The unwise buying of large lots of goods that do not sell except at greatly reduced prices is the chief avenue by which profits are wasted. Money is made on turnovers, not on left-overs."

"Inspect your merchandise carefully, notice whether it is uniform in quality and well up to the samples or specifications."

"Study specialties; they give tone to a department and bring quick profits."

## (2) *The Buyer and His Markets*

"Buyers should study trade journals in order to gain a knowledge of the fundamental conditions which influence their markets. The cost of labor and of raw materials always are important factors in determining prices. Variations in steel tonnage are indications of probable changes in business conditions. The political situation will sometimes influence prices. Crop returns in the United States and political and economic conditions in foreign countries are also factors which must be kept in mind when placing large orders for merchandise."

"Keep a list of manufacturers,—both active and inactive. Get in personal touch with each one from time to time. Don't slight any one. Study each carefully and try to treat him in

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<sup>2</sup>These are reports of salespeople of goods asked for by customers but not in the stocks of the store.

a friendly manner. Small manufacturers sometimes produce attractive new articles, new firms may sell to better advantage, and it is well to broaden the avenues of buying so that the store will not become dependent on a few manufacturers."

"Cultivate the acquaintance of other buyers as much may be learned from them."

"Salesmen of manufacturers also are great sources of information. Listen carefully to their selling arguments, notice the strongest points made by each, so that you will be assisted in the comparison and selection of merchandise. Examine every line of samples, but do not talk too much when looking at samples; your criticisms may aid a competitor. If you see a fault in merchandise, pass it up."

"Keep your appointments with salesmen—if you cannot do so, notify them. You will gain their favor by treating them in a friendly and courteous manner, so that they will bring to your attention 'off price' merchandise. But always keep in mind the motto, 'I am going to buy what I want,—not what the salesman wants to sell.'"

"The card record of each manufacturer should contain accurate information covering such points as:

"Reliability in delivering goods?

"Does he always fill orders at the time agreed upon?

"Capacity of his plant. How large an order can be handled promptly?

"Quality of his goods. Will they maintain a uniform grade, or run above or below the standard of the sample?

"Honesty and business standing of the firm. Is it necessary to be on the lookout for underhand deals?"

### *(3) Marking the Stock*

Buyers are responsible for fixing the prices at which the commodities in their departments are to be sold. This must be done in accordance with the general policies of the store. Elaborate statistical studies and expert accounting is necessary in order to adjust selling prices so that they will cover properly the varied expenses of a great store. The necessity of keeping the stock moving complicates the problems of price fixing. The buyer in consultation with his merchandiser

must decide when a mark-down is necessary in order to avoid carrying too heavy a stock of goods which will deteriorate in value.

There are great variations between stores in the methods of price fixing, so that each group of buyers is in need of careful instruction by the merchandisers or executives who are responsible for his store policies. The whole matter of retail prices is a field of economics about which little is known and in which there is great need for economic research.

### *The Successful Buyer*

What constitutes a successful buyer who would be looked upon as a suitable candidate for promotion to the responsibilities of a merchandiser is suggested by the following extracts:

“The buyer's reputation is determined by four factors:

(1) The volume of goods sold during the year.

(2) The number of turnovers, or the number of times his capital comes back from the sale of goods and can be used again for buying new stock.

(3) The amount of net profits.

(4) Stock conditions when the inventory is taken.”

“The real merchant must have two things continuously, (1) volume of sales, and (2) sufficient net profits. Nothing but volume of sales can overcome the inertia of fixed expenses and provide surplus profits.”

“A buyer is bound to make mistakes,—but it is much better for him to make mistakes than not to make any because he is not aggressive.”

“Keep profits up, your terms right, your stocks clean, and success is yours.”

### ORGANIZING THE VOCATIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE STORE

The co-operation for educational purposes which may be developed in the working force of the store has almost unlimited possibilities. The offering of prizes for suggestions which will increase efficiency is a common method of enlisting this interest of employees in both industrial and mercantile establishments. Spontaneous intellectual activity of this sort is comparatively rare, but with some stimulation and

suggestions from an efficient educational department there are but few groups of store employees who are unable to contribute from their experience data of value in promoting the success of the business. Bundlers and packers may discover how to conserve expensive supplies, delivery people observe ways of shortening routes and avoiding frequent undelivered merchandise, auditors and inspectors discover the errors in sales slips, which are most common; complaint clerks learn the causes of offense which drive away the customers; and salespeople gather first impressions about what the public will buy. The success of the store educational work is measured largely by its ingenuity in gathering and disseminating the varied information which results from the daily experiences of the store working force.

#### *A Store Advisory Board*

The advisory board which has been organized by the educational director of one of the Boston stores is an effective device for, as she expresses it, "feeding into the department problems from the point of view of the fellow worker." Fourteen representative employees of the store meet with the director for the purpose of discussing what subjects should be taken up in order to increase the comfort or efficiency of employees or the success of the store. Members of such a committee may report suggestions from those whom they represent, and may assist in enforcing standards which have been adopted in conferences. Another experienced educational director pointed out the folly of giving power without responsibility; when employees through their representatives co-operate in the development of store policies promoting efficiency, they will appreciate the justice of the demand that they assist in their enforcement.

#### *Service Clubs or Boaster Clubs*

Continued training of the regular selling force of one Boston store has taken the form of "service clubs" whose aim is "to give better service to customers through increased intelligence and alertness of salespersons,—resulting in increased sales."<sup>22</sup> The members of these clubs meet in groups at

times when they can be spared from their departments for the purpose of receiving instruction in salesmanship and in store policies. Such subjects are considered as, methods of approaching a customer, talking points of merchandise, suitable English for use in discussing stock and how to meet emergencies. Demonstration sales are held and discussed or criticised by the club members. Loyalty to the store is promoted by teaching the history of its development, by pointing out the numerous ways in which its managers endeavor to deal justly and generously with the store staff, and by showing the intimate connections between the personal welfare of employees and the development of the business which supplies them with a livelihood.

#### *Co-operation Between Store Education and Employment Departments*

The necessity of close co-operation between the education and employment departments is so apparent that the two forms of service are frequently organized as one department. The body of information which results from efforts at job analyses and standardization is indispensable to the development of sound work in both branches of store service. The two departments must co-operate in providing new workers to fill vacancies and in preventing the heavy expenses resulting from unnecessary changes in the store personnel. No amount of subsequent training can remedy the natural shortcomings of poorly selected employees. Frequently the carefully organized plans for training and promotion are inoperative because it is impossible to overcome the natural handicaps of persons who were employed without consideration of whether it would be possible to prepare them for positions to which they normally would be promoted. Recently an educational director made a careful study of a group of store employees whose positions were such that they could learn the duties of executives. She discovered that only 2 out of 24 possessed the qualifications which would enable them to succeed the executives whom they assisted. This discovery led to the formation of specifications which will guide the employment department so that the places will be filled in the future with persons whose natural and

educational qualifications indicate a capacity for winning promotion to the positions for which they serve as understudies.

The employment manager and educational director must co-operate in the study of the talents of the store personnel and in efforts to find for each person the position in which the best service can be rendered. The records of sales, the results of tests in the educational work, and the reports of executives are combined to form estimates of the value of the services rendered. Persons who fail in one department of the store may succeed in another, and the transfer of an employee already familiar with the store system means less expense than the training of a new worker. There is danger of grave injustice to more modest members of the store force when there are no systematic tests of ability to aid in the selection of persons who fill the more important store positions. When definite training is offered, when conferences for standardizing store practices give opportunities to show resourcefulness, and when self-governing schemes invite the exercise of capacity for leadership, recognition and increase of wages are given to persons capable of real service rather than to those who merely are clamorous and self-assertive.

#### NEED OF TRAINING FOR STORE EXECUTIVES

Two universities have established special departments for research in retail selling, and valuable investigations are being made by other organizations. Such activities will pave the way for a better training of store executives. Conservative, autocratic, store executives, who have no conception of the new standards of store efficiency and are untouched by the modern spirit of democracy, are the most serious obstacles to the development of the fine spirit of harmonious co-operation in rendering efficiently an important public service which is the ultimate aim of education for retail selling.



## APPENDIX I

### STATISTICAL DATA SHOWING CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT OF JUVENILE STORE WORKERS IN BOSTON

#### *Educational Certificates of Boston Young Persons 16 to 21 Years of Age*

Educational certificates issued to minors 16 to 21 years of age have supplied statistical data for our discussions of the distribution of young persons in Boston business establishments, of industries between which they shift, and of seasonal variations in their entry upon or changes of employment. The law requiring that, "No child who is over sixteen and under twenty-one years of age shall be employed in a factory, workshop, manufacturing, mechanical or mercantile establishment unless his employer procures and keeps on file an educational certificate showing the age of the child and his ability or inability to read and write as hereinafter provided,"<sup>1</sup> became effective in September, 1913. Like the employment certificate which is required of minors 14 to 16 years of age, the educational certificate is issued after the young person has obtained a promise of employment, and "must be returned by the employer to the office of the superintendent of schools from which it is issued, within two days after employment by him of the person named thereon terminates."<sup>2</sup> A new or reissued certificate is obtained when another position has been promised or secured.

Two types of educational certificates, commonly known as "gold" and "gray" certificates, are used: the former is issued to literate young persons, and the latter to illiterates, or those who do not possess "such ability to read, write and spell in the English language as is required for the completion of the

<sup>1</sup>Acts of 1913, Chapter 779, Section 23.

<sup>2</sup>Acts of 1913, Chapter 779, Sections 15 and 22. This statement is printed on the backs of all certificates issued.

fourth grade."\* The gray is exchanged for a gold certificate whenever the young person succeeds in attaining this educational requirement.

#### WAR-TIME REDISTRIBUTION OF JUVENILE LABOR

Nearly two hundred thousand certificates were issued between September 17, 1913, and January 1, 1919, over half (57.5 per cent) of which were obtained by young persons who were changing their positions. Two striking developments which have taken place since the outbreak of the war are shown in this summary of the records of the certificating office: (1) The numbers of illiterate young persons have decreased rapidly because of the checking of immigration; in 1914 twenty-five hundred (2,481) went to work, while only 217 received their first educational certificates in 1918. (2) The extensive redistribution of labor made necessary by the development of war industries is shown by the abnormal increase of the re-issued certificates, or those taken when changing positions; in 1914-1915 the numbers issued were fourteen and sixteen thousand (13,918 and 16,462) respectively, but nearly twenty-six thousand were issued in 1916 and in 1917, and over twenty-eight thousand in 1918.

#### SAMPLE GROUP OF 21-YEAR-OLD WORKERS USED IN THIS STUDY

A sample group of educational certificates was selected in order to obtain statistical data showing the relative importance of different opportunities for employment open to juvenile workers. It was decided in a conference of officials of the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, of the Boston Public Schools and of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, that a group of expired certificates, which had been issued to young persons who became twenty-one years of age between July 1, 1915, and June 30, 1916, would be suitable for this purpose. A portion of the work records of young persons of this age group would be free from abnormal, war-time influences, and a study of previous experiences made at the

\*Raised to sixth grade in 1919. Amendment to R. L. 44, Sec. 1, Gen. Acts of 1919, Chap. 281.

time of entry upon adult life would assist in an estimate of the relative values of the factors determining vocational selection and development. It seemed desirable, also, to attempt a sort of stock taking of the vocational attainments of young persons who had reached the age when society considers them capable of assuming the full responsibilities of maturity.

**CLASSIFICATION OF THE SAMPLE GROUP BY BUSINESSES OF THE EMPLOYING FIRM**

The 9,356 certificates which had been issued to 6,385 young men and women of the selected age group supplied the names and addresses of the firms authorized to employ them, but, unlike the employment certificates issued to children 14 to 16 years of age, no data were given showing the kinds of work in which their labor was to be utilized. A rough classification of the sample group was obtained by identifying the businesses of the firms to whom the last certificates of the young persons were issued.

**USES MADE OF TABLE SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE GROUP**

The large table showing the general distribution of young men and women when about twenty-one years old, in Boston establishments for which certification is required, has been used for the following purposes:

- (1) The relative importance of the different kinds of business requiring the services of the young persons is indicated.
- (2) A rough estimate of the location of opportunities for employment in metropolitan Boston is given.
- (3) The sex distribution of workers at the time of entry upon adult life is shown.

**EMPLOYMENT CERTIFICATES ISSUED TO MINORS 14 TO 16 YEARS OF AGE**

All wage-earning minors 14 to 16 years of age are required to obtain employment certificates when first going to work, and whenever a change is made from one employer to another. The certificate specifies not only the names and addresses of both the employer and the working child, but also the par-

ticular occupation in which the child is to be engaged. Legal evidence of age is required and a medical officer is in attendance to make physical examinations of new applicants for certificates and to determine whether the specified occupations are adapted to the strength of the children. In order to obtain a certificate when first going to work, or a reissued certificate when shifting takes place, the child must present a signed statement from his prospective employer which tells the nature of the proposed work and pledges the employer to observe the legal restrictions on the use of the labor of minors of this age group.

The rapid enlistment\* and redistribution of juvenile labor during the war period is shown by the fluctuations in the issuance of work certificates. The maximum demand for the labor of both the 14 to 16 and the 16 to 21 year old groups of juvenile workers came in 1918 when the drafts had withdrawn older men, and our own war activities were greatest. The two most striking trends of the war period were, (1) the enormous amount of shifting or changing of positions by juveniles of both age groups, and (2) the striking increase in the proportion of the younger workers who were certificated for employment in factories.

TABLES SHOWING OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF JUVENILE STORE EMPLOYEES, AND THE AGE AND EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF THOSE EMPLOYED IN DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONS AND TYPES OF STORES

The records of juvenile store employees who had been placed by the Vocational Guidance Bureau of the Boston Public Schools were supplemented by information found in store files so that descriptive data were obtained for one thousand juvenile employees of Boston department, dry-goods and clothing

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\*The certification records of the Boston office do not reveal the extent to which children left school to enter industry, as many of the new workers found employment outside of Boston. A study of the enrollment in elementary and secondary schools and of the number of elementary school graduates who entered secondary schools shows that the increase in school attendance of the period before the outbreak of the war was checked, and that a loss in school enrollment appears in 1916 and reaches its greatest extent in 1918. Details of the changes in school attendance are given in my article on "War-time Child Labor in Boston," *The Child Labor Bulletin*, November, 1918, pp. 185-197.

stores who had held positions during the decade 1908-1918.<sup>5</sup> Unlike the young persons who were 21 years old, this second sample group used in the investigation was composed of juveniles representing all ages between 14 and 21. The discussions of the occupational distribution of juvenile store workers and of the variations in sexes, ages and education between those found in different types of stores engaged in the different occupations have been based on these statistical data.

Variations in plans of organization of the stores in which the juveniles were employed have made a classification by ad-

TABLE 4. DISTRIBUTION BY OCCUPATIONS AND SCHOOLING OF 1000 JUVENILES EMPLOYED IN BOSTON DEPARTMENT, DRY GOODS AND CLOTHING STORES. 1908-1918

OCCUPATIONS	Number of Juveniles Engaged in Specified Occupations Who Left School From Specified Grades													
	Total	7th and Less			8th			Secondary			Secondary			
Young Persons	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
Total, . . . . .	1000	800	200	90	73	17	282	224	58	211	159	52	417	344
Public Service, . . . . .	637	546	91	64	53	11	204	174	80	140	118	22	229	201
Salespersons, . . . . .	196	163	34	7	5	2	35	30	5	39	30	9	115	97
Floor, errand, cash. teller, . . . . .	113	83	30	23	20	3	55	40	15	24	14	10	11	9
Collectors, . . . . .	5	..	5	..	..	..	2	..	3	..	..	..	3	..
Inspectors, examiners, checkers, . . . . .	109	108	1	3	3	..	34	34	..	25	25	..	42	41
Cashiers, . . . . .	77	75	2	..	..	..	15	14	1	20	20	..	42	41
Bindlers, . . . . .	119	107	12	22	17	5	58	53	6	27	26	3	12	12
Miscellaneous, <sup>6</sup> . . . . .	18	11	7	4	3	1	5	3	2	5	4	1	4	1
Delivery, <sup>7</sup> . . . . .	82	2	30	..	..	..	11	1	10	18	1	12	8	..
Care of Merchandise, . . . . .	141	93	48	19	13	6	39	29	10	34	18	16	49	38
Stock workers, . . . . .	110	69	41	15	9	6	34	24	10	27	15	12	34	21
Stampers and markers, . . . . .	15	13	2	..	..	..	2	2	..	3	2	1	10	9
Receiving clerks, . . . . .	4	..	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	2	2	..	3
Millinery makers, . . . . .	5	5	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	1	1	..	3	..
Alteration employees, . . . . .	7	6	1	3	3	..	3	3	..	1	1	1	129	110
Financial, . . . . .	184	153	26	7	7	..	26	20	6	22	21	1	11	19
Auditors, . . . . .	19	18	1	2	2	..	3	3	..	5	5	..	10	1
Bookkeepers, . . . . .	11	7	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	..	6	4
Clerical, . . . . .	154	133	21	6	6	..	23	17	6	18	17	1	108	94
Miscellaneous, <sup>8</sup> . . . . .	6	1	5	..	..	..	2	..	2	2	1	1	2	..

<sup>5</sup>Records were copied in the order in which they appeared in the files. When tabulated we were surprised to find that by chance the sex distribution of the 1000 cases was the symmetrical 200 males and 800 females of the tables.

<sup>6</sup>Soda fountain, restaurant, personal service, information, locker-room employees.

<sup>7</sup>Distributed as follows: packers and shippers, 19; sorters, 1; bookers, 7; delivery drivers, 2; auto helpers and truck boys, 3.

<sup>8</sup>Mail boy, order boy, assistant electrician, window dresser, machine examiner.

ministrative divisions of stores impracticable. A rough grouping of occupations more directly concerned with the service of the public, of those connected with the delivery of purchases and the care of the merchandise, and of those usually connected with the financial or controlling office, was all that could be undertaken when there was so complete an absence of standardization.

#### **CARE OF HEALTH OF EMPLOYEES IN RETAIL STORES\***

Many Boston stores maintain dispensary and hospital service for the benefit of employees and customers. The largest of these stores, which has 3,700 employees, 2,500 of whom are women, treated 1,912 cases during the month of the investigation. Over 90 per cent (93.2) of those cared for were store employees. The cases treated in one week in the hospital clinics of four stores show the important services of the store nurses and doctors. The prompt treatment of diseased conditions prevents much loss of time and energy. No doubt the instruction of store employees in personal hygiene which is a by-product of such frequent consultations, has a value quite as great as the treatment of specific ailments.

Maladies from which store workers suffer are shown in the reports of the diagnoses of the patients treated during one week in the clinics of four stores (Table 5). The most common complaint was headache, which is, of course, merely a symptom indicating varied disorders such as defective eyes, indigestion, exhaustion, or various forms of nervous strain. It is difficult for store employees to protect themselves from the infectious colds or sore throats, so it is not surprising to find this group second in importance. The continuous standing of the women employees results in much discomfort during their menstrual periods. Since both "headache" and "colds and sore throats" are diagnoses which may cover varied forms of illness, this weakness of the female employees is the chief complaint treated in the store clinics.

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\*The data bearing on this topic were extracted from a report of an investigation under my direction, made by Miss A. W. Johnson, a student in the Simmons College School for Social Workers—Lucile Eaves.

TABLE 5. DIAGNOSIS OF CASES TREATED IN ONE WEEK BY THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENTS OF FOUR BOSTON STORES

DIAGNOSIS	Number of Patients Whose Diagnosis Was as Specified				
	Total	Store I	Store II	Store III	Store IV
Total, Headache	1028	486	216	178	173
185	96	36	24	29	
Dyspepsia	107	61	18	4	24
Indigestion					
Colds	132	49	17	38	18
Sore Throats	85	19	8	6	7
Infections	91	26	15	48	7
Dressings					
Cuts	31	14	12	8	2
Barache	6	6			
Toothache	30	9	6	8	12
Finger					
Sores	42	8	9	4	21
Foot					
Ankle					
Thumb					
Cramps	129	47	27	18	25
Dysmenorrhea		12			
Faint	12	6	3	3	1
Sore Eye	42	29	5	3	11
Burns	7	2	5		..
Nausea	11	8	..	8	5
Constipation	14	3	..	6	5
Fatigue	9	6	..		3
Miscellaneous <sup>12</sup>	183	55	44	21	13
Cards <sup>13</sup>	23	..	22	..	..

PLANS FOR TEACHING THE CARE OF STOCK<sup>12</sup>*Preliminary Study of Conditions in a Department*

Investigations by persons who were not members of the departments in need of reorganization or special educational efforts were found unsatisfactory because they irritated or embarrassed the employees. Better results were obtained when a member of the education staff studied conditions while working as a regular employee of the department for which special instruction was being planned. Difficulties to be overcome in securing proper care and an orderly appearance of the stock were noted, and the persons who were most successful in dealing with various parts of the work were discovered.

*Organization for Care of Stock*

When a clear understanding of the conditions to be dealt with had been obtained, a meeting of all workers in the de-

<sup>12</sup>Miscellaneous—scattered cases of Sprains, Neuritis, Cuideo, Glands, Anæmia, etc.

<sup>13</sup>One store keeps its continued cases for doctor as Cards.

<sup>14</sup>This summary of a report issued from the Education Department of the William Filene's Sons Company store is given for the purpose of illustrating the results of efforts to standardize store occupations spoken of on pages 55-59, Chapter IV. The report was prepared by Miss Helen Parker who worked under the direction of Miss Bernice M. Cannon, the Educational Director of the store.

partment was called. At this conference agreements were reached about the best methods of doing the various tasks connected with the proper care of the stock. Demonstrations by members of the force whose work had been found exceptionally good assisted in this standardization of the activities of the department. After the employees reached an agreement about the best ways of doing their work, the next need was some means by which each worker would be held to the established standards. A member of the group was elected head of stock or captain of the crew, and it was agreed that she should be responsible for assigning special tasks and enforcing the regulations which had been adopted.

*Care of Folded House-Dresses, Nurses' and Maids' Uniforms*

The salespeople agreed that excellent stock care would require the following activities each morning:

*In the Morning*

1. Be sure that stock shelves are dusted as often as necessary.
2. Be sure that dresses are taken out and folded often enough so that shelves look neat and orderly.

**To Fold Dresses Properly**

Lay dress flat, face down, full length on counter, fold skirt in equal parts (the two sides over the center portion), next take sleeves and, putting cuffs and elbows together, fold in at the elbows; the collar and belt must next be folded in flat and the back of the neck doubled back to the hem of the skirt; fold a second time and smooth out.

3. Put dresses back on shelves in pairs, being sure that dresses face each other, hem to hem. Dresses must be piled so that their edges make a straight line on all sides.
4. Be responsible for condition of shelves back of counters assigned, for assigned reserve stock, and assigned tops of tables.
5. Come in at eight o'clock for one week, taking turns in the

department, in order to insure the department's being in good condition when the store opens.

6. Be sure that credits and new merchandise are put back in their respective places as quickly as possible.
7. See that slow-selling merchandise, if any, is in its correct place.

#### *Care of Stock During the Day*

Stock work during the day was also standardized by formulating additional regulations:

1. Be sure that each salesperson folds her stock as she shows it, whenever this is possible.
2. See that each salesperson goes back and folds the stock she has shown, if there is time between sales.
3. Be sure that each salesperson puts her stock in condition, if it has been very busy and there comes a lull in the selling in the department.
4. See that model she wants is not already on the counter before she takes another from stock.
5. *Additional agreements on stock care*

Three more things remained to be accomplished before the salespeople in the department could take good care of stock, from its coming into the department until its final sale to the customer.

- a. Credits and new merchandise came out at all hours and complicated matters.

The time when credits or new merchandise shall be brought out into the department is now regulated by the head of stock. Therefore, unless she knows there is an immediate need of the merchandise, it is allowed to come out only when the department is not busy, morning and late afternoon. Each girl then takes her own portion of the newly arrived dresses and incorporates them into her stock already on the shelves.

- b. The appearance of the department at eight-thirty, when the store opens, did not seem up to standard to many of the salespeople. Therefore, it was decided that each girl, in turn, should come in for a week from eight to five. This girl is responsible for getting the

department display ready, forms, tops of tables, etc., and for starting her own stock immediately, so that the rest of the department will get the habit of beginning work promptly.

- c. The tables in the center of the room were always in heaps, no matter how hard the girls worked on them. So as an experiment, the executives and salespeople agreed to try doing away with piles of dresses, and box model dresses, having about eight or ten boxes on top of each table.

At first everyone was very doubtful, but now, if anyone suggests going back to the old way there is a great disturbance.

#### DUTIES OF THE HEAD OF STOCK

The duties and powers of their executive officer or head of stock were defined as follows:

1. Divide stock evenly among salespeople. In case of absence see that cases and chests of drawers are covered as usual.
2. Assign early in the week an 8-5 day to various girls, in turn, to be sure the department display is in place and ready for the store opening. This means forms, tops of tables, etc.
3. Be sure department reserve stock and Mail Order reserve stock is in good condition.
4. Supervise the appearance of the stock. Supervise the appearance of the tops of the tables. Supervise the condition of the shelves behind the counters.
5. Organize work of stock-correction and supervise the work of each salesperson from beginning to end.
6. Be responsible for stock-takings which are less complete, then for quarterly.
7. Be sure that credits which are brought out to department are put back in stock by the salespeople who have the corresponding stock.
8. Be responsible for the quantity and condition of new stock sent from the marker, and for the distribution among the salespeople.

9. Select dresses for forms and see that they are dressed properly.
10. See that salespeople carry out their agreement of caring for stock during the day.
11. See that new salespeople are trained in stock work.

*Care of Hanging Stock, or Machine-Made Dresses of Silks, Serges or Cottons*

The more expensive machine-made dresses are known as "hanging stock" because they usually hang in cases; they are grouped by sizes, prices and materials. After being tried on by customers, they are thrown frequently in heaps on chairs, which results in a disorderly appearance in the department and a rapid deterioration of the stock. Dresses hung in the cases may need pressing or the sewing on of missing hooks and eyes or buttons. After several conferences the saleswomen came to the following agreements about the care of their stock:

*Morning Care of Hanging Stock*

1. Arrangement. Arranged by materials, sizes, colors and styles.
2. Care.
  - a. Separate all dresses which need extra care.
    - (a) Sew on all missing buttons. Sew on all missing hooks and eyes. Sew on all labels.
    - (b) Take to presser all dresses needing pressing.
    - (c) Take out carefully all manufacturer's labels, which may have been left in by mistake.
    - (d) Take to marker all dresses which need new tickets, either because ticket is soiled or broken or has dropped off.
    - (e) Take bastings out of plaits carefully.
    - (f) If hem is taken out, send to sewing women.
    - (g) Take to sewing women all dresses that need spots or soil removed.
  - b. One morning a week take out all merchandise that is one month old for examination by the buyers; two months old, for mark-down or exemption by buyers.

*Care of Hanging Stock During the Day*

1. Always
  - a. Hang dresses on hangers with hooks facing the sleeves.
  - b. Hook dresses in two places to keep dresses on hangers.
  - c. Place dresses on costumer in right case, or on rail in front of right case.
  - d. Never leave dress-form bare in the department.
2. In non-busy seasons salespeople hang away stock from rods in front of own cases, (11-4-30 salespeople to be given a share of this work). Ten to twelve dresses in front of each case make a good display.

**SUPERVISION OF CARE OF HANGING STOCK**

The title of "head of stock" had been held by two sales-women in the department, but they had failed to realize that there was a real, executive, stock job for them. After agreements about the care of stock had been reached, typewritten reports were submitted to the executives and members of the working force of the department. Friction is avoided by giving this opportunity to approve or amend the details of the new regulations. When fully accepted, the heads of stock became responsible for enforcing these regulations. Their duties were outlined as follows:

1. Divide stock evenly among salespeople. In cases of absence see that all cases are covered as usual.
2. See that sewing is all taken out and that one or two salespeople are detailed each morning to finish it, if possible.
3. Once a week, at least, look over all stock in the department to see that:
  - a. Sewing is done, buttons, hooks and eyes, labels, etc.
  - b. Dresses are arranged as to materials, sizes, colors, etc., same in each case.
  - c. Dresses are hooked and buttoned up.
  - d. Dresses are not in cases, if they need to be pressed or to have spots removed.
  - e. Dresses which should be taken out for stock correction are not in cases.
  - f. Dresses have fresh appearing tickets.

4. Stock correction. Organize work for each salesperson and supervise from beginning to end.
5. See that through the day salespeople hang dresses on costumers, and hook them up enough to keep on hangers.
6. See that salespeople, as time allows, hang away dresses so that only ten or twelve are in front of each case.
7. See that 11-4:30 salespeople have share of stock to hang away during the day.
8. Wednesday afternoon select dresses for forms, and Thursday morning see that stock girl has dressed them properly.
9. Be sure that salespeople see new models tried on.
10. See that the stock girl takes out for the salespeople to see, first, with the day's advertisement, one dress of every model which is in the newspaper; second, with the window-list, one dress of every model which is being shown in the window.
11. See that assistant head of stock is trained to assume these duties and take turns with the head of stock coming in on an 8-5 schedule, to be sure, first, that the department display forms, etc., are in condition for opening of store, and second, that stock work is begun promptly by salespeople when they come in.
12. See that merchandise which has been sent over from the Marking Room is in good condition and agrees in quantity with the list which accompanies it.

#### COMPLETE LIST OF STATISTICAL TABLES USED IN THIS REPORT

The high cost of composition has prevented the publication of a large mass of statistical material tabulated in the Research Department of the Union while making this study of the experiences of juvenile employees of Boston retail stores. The general reader will not be interested in such tables. Investigators who wish to compare our data with that which they are collecting for studies in other cities may obtain any of the statistical tables in the following list by paying the cost of copying and mailing. Inquiries should be addressed to the

Research Department, Women's Educational and Industrial Union, Boston, Mass.

1. Distribution of a Sample Group of Young Persons Employed by Boston Selling Firms.  
(Table 1 of this report).
2. Distribution of a Sample Group of Boston Young Persons 21 Years of Age in Retail and Wholesale Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores.
- 3-a. Number of Positions Held by 168 Boys Previous to Entering the Last Known Place of Employment, Distributed by Age on Entering the Firm, Based on Verified Application Schedules. (Table 2-a of this report).
- 3-b. Number of Positions Held by 252 Girls Previous to Entering the Last Known Place of Employment, Distributed by Age on Entering the Firm. Based on Verified Application Schedules. (Table 2-b of this report).
4. Stability of Employment, Young Persons Last Certificated to Stores, Classified According to Number of Certificates Issued for Each Person in the Period September, 1913, to June, 1916.
5. Boys and Girls Certified Last to Stores of Specified Types Found October 1, 1916, to be Present, Gone or Unknown at Store to Which Last Certified.
6. Boys and Girls Certified Last to Specified Stores, Found October 1, 1916, to be Present, Gone or Unknown at Stores to Which Last Certified.
7. Previous Employment of Store Workers. Classification of 689 Previous Certificates Issued to 1,476 Young Persons Last Certified to Stores, According to Business of Previous Certificate.
8. Previous Employment of Boys and Girls Working in Stores and in Non-Selling Employments. Previous Certificates and Application Blanks Classified According to Business of Previous Employment. (Shown by previous certificates of 1,530 21-year-old young persons and the application blanks of 420 young persons who sought store positions when two or three years younger).

9. Previous Certificates—Total and for Store Positions—Classified by Business of Last Certification, for 6,385 Young Persons.
- 10-a. Positions Held Previous to Entering the Stores in Which 252 Girls Were Last Known to be Employed, Distributed by the Business of the Previously Employing Firms. (Based on Verified Application Schedules).
- 10-b. Positions Held Previous to Entering the Stores in Which 168 Boys Were Last Known to be Employed, Distributed by the Business of the Previously Employing Firms. (Based on Verified Application Schedules).
11. Reasons for Leaving Store and Selling Positions as Shown by 222 Application Forms, 28 Personal Interviews and 329 Employers' Records.  
(Table 3 of this report).
12. Wage Rates of Young Persons Employed in Boston Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores, 1908-1915. (Sample group 14 to 21 years old). (Data from Vocational Guidance Department of Boston School Committee and from Verified Application Blanks filed at their places of employment).
13. Earnings of Young Persons Employed in Boston Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores, Prior to 1916. (Sample group 19 to 21 years old). (Data from Pay rolls).
14. Median Wages of Young Persons Employed in Boston Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores, by Occupation and Sex. (Data from Pay rolls).
15. Educational Certificates Issued at the Boston Office to Young Persons 16 to 21 Years of Age. 1913-1918.
16. Young Persons 21 Years of Age Classified by Sex, and by Class of Firm to Which Last Certificated, in Boston and Suburbs, 1915-1916. (This table covers 6 pp.).
17. Variations at the Boston Office in the Issuance of Certificates Required of Working Minors. 1913-1918.
18. Distribution by Places of Employment of Boston Children Fourteen to Sixteen Years of Age Who Were Certificated in Specified Years.

19. Distribution by Places of Employment of Boston Children Fourteen to Sixteen Years of Age Who Obtained First and Reissued Certificates in 1916-1918.
20. Distribution by Sexes of Juveniles Employed in the Specified Occupations in Boston Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores, 1908-1918.
- 21-a. Occupational Distribution of Juveniles Employed in Boston Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores, 1908-1918.
  - A—The Entire Group.
  - 21-b. B—The Department Stores.
  - 21-c. C—The Dry Goods Stores.
  - 21-d. D—The Clothing Stores.
22. Percentage Distribution by Ages and Sex of Juveniles Employed in Specified Occupations in Boston Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores, 1908-1918.
23. Schooling of Juveniles Employed in Boston Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores, 1908-1918.
  - A—Number.
  - B—Percentage.
- 24-a. Distribution by Occupations and Schooling of Juveniles Employed in Boston Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores, 1908-1918.
  - A—Number.  
(Table 4 of this report).
- 24-b. Percentage Distribution by Occupations and Schooling of Juveniles Employed in Boston Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores, 1908-1918.
  - B—Percentage.
25. Number and Percentage of Juveniles Having Specified Schooling Employed in Certain Stores. (A) 1 Department store handling high class goods; (B) 2 Department stores dealing in cheaper goods; (C) 3 Dry goods stores each employing over 800; (D) Small dry goods stores; (E) 1 Clothing store employing over 2,500; (F) All other clothing stores.
26. Busy and Dull Seasons and the Largest and Smallest Numbers Employed in Boston Retail Department, Dry

Goods and Clothing Stores. (Data obtained by personal interviews with store officials).

27. Occupational Distribution of Positions Held when 21 Years Old, by 116 Male and 319 Female Employees of Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores.

28. Distribution of Stock and Sales Positions Held by 38 Males and 142 Females when 21 Years of Age.

29. Wage Rates for Girls and Boys 14 to 21 Years of Age Employed in Boston Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores from 1908-1918. (Data from Records of Vocational Guidance Department of Boston School Committee and from Verified Application Blanks on file at the places of employment).

30. Wage Rates for Girls 14 to 21 Years of Age Employed in Boston Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores in 1914-1915 and 1916-1917, by Occupations. (Data from Records of Vocational Guidance Department of Boston School Committee and from Records on File at Places of Employment).

31-a. Distribution of Girls 14 to 21 Years of Age Employed in Boston Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores, by Occupations and Wage Rates. (Data from Pay rolls).

31-b. Distribution of Boys 14 to 21 Years of Age Employed in Boston Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores, by Occupations and Wage Rates. (Data from Pay rolls).

32-a. Distribution of Girls 14 to 21 Years of Age Employed in Boston Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores, by Wage Rates and Schooling. (Data from Vocational Guidance Department of Boston School Committee and from Verified Application Blanks or other Records on File at the Places of Employment).

32-b. Distribution of Boys 14 to 21 Years of Age Employed in Boston Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores, by Wage Rates and Schooling. (Data from Vocational Guidance Department of Boston School Committee and from Verified Application Blanks or other Records on File at the Places of Employment).

- 33-a. Distribution of Girls 14 to 21 Years of Age Employed in Boston Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores, by Wage Rates and Ages. (Data from Pay rolls).
- 33-b. Distribution of Boys 14 to 21 Years of Age Employed in Boston Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores, by Wage Rates and Ages. (Data from Pay rolls).
- 34. Per Cent of Girls 14 to 21 Years of Age Employed in Boston Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores in 1914-1915 and 1916-1917, Receiving Specified Wage Rates, by Occupations. (Data from Records of Vocational Guidance Department of Boston School Committee and from Records on File at Places of Employment).
- 35. Occupations of Graduates of Secondary Schools (Girls) who had Taken the Course in Salesmanship.
- 36. Cases Treated in Hospital Clinics During One Week in Four Boston Department Stores.
- 37. Diagnoses of Cases Treated in One Week by the Medical Departments of Four Boston Stores.

(Table 5 of this report).

## APPENDIX II

### THE STORE LIBRARY

Studious habits are not characteristics of the rank and file of store workers. Ability and willingness to profit by the rapidly accumulating publications dealing with retail selling must be developed systematically by librarians, educational directors or executives. Stores having librarians may use the systematic plans for circulating instructive printed matter which have been developed in progressive industrial establishments. Periodical literature should be reviewed carefully and all articles of value to store officials clipped or marked. In some cases material may be sent directly to those for whom it has special value, and in others notices of new books or periodicals may be given by means of bulletins telling of their contents. Various devices like travelling bookshelves, posters, and the printing of significant extracts in store newspapers, may be used to encourage employees to develop reading habits.

The Educational Director of one of the Boston stores pointed out the stimulation to the use of vocational literature which results from the adoption of a plan by which employees are organized in occupational groups under the educational leadership of fellow workers who have shown special ability for the different store tasks. Working assistants on the staff of the educational director who are responsible for maintaining the efficiency of the groups of workers in their charge are eager for suggestions and often have happy facilities for translating bookish language into store vernaculars, for making practical applications of general suggestions or for pointing out principles involved in the interpretation of concrete store experiences. Their quotations from the literature of retail selling, or demands that members of the groups be prepared to present information about certain definite questions, may stimulate less alert associates to a greater use of available publications.

Six classes of books suitable for a store vocational edu-

tion library are suggested by our analysis of the qualifications desired in store employees:<sup>1</sup>

1. Books dealing with personal hygiene and physical culture.
2. Discussions which will promote a thorough knowledge of the stock handled.
3. Studies dealing with the principles and arts of salesmanship.
4. Presentation of efficient methods of doing office or clerical work.
5. Discussions of store organization and of the significance in community life of retail mercantile establishments.
6. The general economic background which influences retail selling.

The excellent publications which might be cited under these various headings would fill the shelves of a large library. Our space will permit merely a few references to books and periodicals, most of which are given because they have been found helpful in the Boston classes organized for the vocational training of store employees.

### *1. Hygiene and Physical Culture*

Fisher, Irving, and Fisk, Eugene L. *How to live*. Funk & Wagnalls co., New York, 1919.

Gulick, Luther H. *The efficient life*. Doubleday, Page & co. New York, 1907.

Hough, Theodore, and Sidgwick, William T. *The human mechanism*. Ginn & co., Boston, 1918.

Pyle, Walter L. (Ed.). *A manual of personal hygiene*. W. B. Saunders, Philadelphia, 1917.

*Physical Culture Magazine*. Physical Culture pub. co., New York.

*Good Health*. Battle Creek Publishing co., Battle Creek, Michigan.

### *2. Knowledge of the Stock*

Manufacturers are developing much interest in efforts to spread a knowledge of the methods by which their wares are

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<sup>1</sup>See previous Chapters III and IV.

produced. Frequently they issue attractive illustrated booklets and prepare samples showing stages in the development of their products. Such educational materials often may be obtained without charge. Trade journals also are valuable sources of information because they discuss new goods and present their peculiar merits or selling points. The merchandise manuals prepared for the New York University classes and for the Economist Training School are well-adapted to the needs of department store employees. Studies of textiles prepared for use by classes in home economics are equally valuable for enlightening the salespeople who supply the needs of housewives.

**Department Store Merchandise Manuals**, edited by Beulah E. Kennard, published by the Ronald Press company, New York, 1917-1919:

Aiken, Charlotte Rankin. The millinery department.

Hutchinson, E. Lillian. The house-furnishings department, kitchenware and laundry equipment.

Kennard, Beulah E. The jewelry department.

Lehmann, Mary A. The leather goods department.

Lehmann, Mary A. The stationery department.

Souder, M. Attie. The notion department.

Thompson, Eliza B. The silk department.

**Graphic Instructor Selling Helps** (series of primers fully illustrated describing commodities commonly sold in dry goods and department stores). Economist Training School, New York.

Baldt, Laura I. Clothing for women; selection, design, construction. J. B. Lippincott & co., 1916.

Chittick, James. Silk manufacturing and its problems. Published by the author, New York, 1913.

Dooley, William H. Textiles for commercial, industrial, evening and domestic arts schools. D. C. Heath & co., New York, 1910.

Duran, Leo. Raw silk, a practical handbook for the buyer. Silk Publishing Company, New York, 1913.

Gibbs, Charlotte M. Household textiles. Whitcomb and Barrows, Boston, 1916.

Kinne, Helen, and Cooley, Anna M. *Shelter and Clothing*.  
Macmillan company, New York, 1917.

McGowan, Ellen Beers, and Waite, Charlotte A. *Textiles and clothing*. Macmillan company, New York, 1919.

Nystrom, Paul H. *Textiles*. University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis., 1916.

Smith, Willard M. *Gloves past and present*. Imperial Engraving and Printing company, New York, 1918.

Watt, Sir George. *Wild and cultivated cotton plants of the world*. Longmans, Green & company, New York, 1907.

Wilkinson, Frederick. *The story of the cotton plant*. D. Appleton & company, New York, 1917.

Woolman, Mary S., and McGowan, Ellen B. *Textiles, a handbook for the student and the consumer*. Macmillan company, New York, 1918.

Trade Journals: A complete list of trade journals may be obtained from *A Guide to Periodicals*, published by Geo. Wahr, Ann Arbor, Michigan. We have selected a few which will be of general value:

*American Silk Journal*, 373 4th Avenue, New York.

*American Wool and Cotton Reporter*, 530 Atlantic Avenue, Boston.

*Dry Goods Economist*, 239 West 39th Street, New York.

*Men's Wear*, 12th Street and Broadway, New York, N. Y.

*Millinery Trade Review*, 1182 Broadway, New York.

*Textile World Journal*, 144 Congress Street, Boston.

*Women's and Infants' Furnisher*. 373 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

*Women's Wear*. 8 E. 13th Street, New York, N. Y.

### *3. Salesmanship*

Barrett, H. J. *How to sell more goods, secrets of successful salesmanship*. Harper and Brothers. New York, 1918.

Fisk, J. W. *Salesmanship. A text book on retail selling*. Merchants Publicity company, 239 West 39th Street, New York, 1914.

Hoover, Simon Robert. *The science and art of salesmanship*. Macmillan company, N. Y., 1918.

Hoyt, Charles Wilson. *Scientific sales management. A prac-*

tical application of the principles of scientific management to selling. George B. Woolson & company, New York, 1918.

Ivey, Paul Wesley. Elements of retail salesmanship. Macmillan company, New York, 1920.

Kennard, Beulah Elfreth. The educational director. The Ronald Press co., New York, 1918.

Maxwell, William. The training of a saleswoman. J. B. Lippincott & co., Philadelphia and London, 1919.

Norton, Helen Rich. A text-book on retail selling. Ginn & company, Boston, 1919. Bibliography, pp. 267-271.

Norton, Helen Rich. Department store education. No. 9, Bureau of Education, Washington, D. C., 1917.

Prince, L. W. Retail selling. Bulletin No. 22, Federal Board for Vocational Education, Washington, D. C., 1919.

Whitehead, Harold. Principles of salesmanship. The Ronald Press co., New York, 1918.

#### *4. Office or Clerical Work*

Kilduff, E. J. The private secretary, his duties and opportunities. The Century company, 1916.

Reynolds, W. B., and Thornton, F. W. Duties of the junior accountant. American Institute of Accounts, New York, 1919.

Schreffler, Robert B. Department store statistics with the aid of the slide rule. Published by the author. 215 S. Market Street, Chicago, 1914.

Schulze, J. William. Office administration. McGraw-Hill Book company, New York. London: Hill Publishing company, 1919.

Spencer, Ellen Lane. The efficient secretary. Frederick A. Stokes company, 1916.

#### *5. Retail Mercantile Establishments, Organization and General Condition*

The vocational education surveys of various cities supply data shewing the opportunities for employment and plans for training the young people who enter mercantile establishments. Business magazines like *System* and *Industrial Man-*

agement publish some special articles dealing with retail selling and many more general discussions which are applicable to store office work or organization. *Women's Wear* contains daily reports showing plans of store organization and welfare or educational activities found in the more progressive stores.

Butler, Elizabeth B. *Saleswomen in mercantile stores*, Baltimore, 1909. Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1912.

Leonard, Robert J. Director. *Report of the Richmond, Indiana, Survey for Vocational Education*. Indianapolis, 1916. Pages 307-368.

Massachusetts Minimum Wage Commission. *Wages of women in retail stores*, Bulletin No. 6, 1915.

Preliminary report on the effect of the minimum wage in Massachusetts retail stores, Bulletin No. 12, 1916.

Minneapolis, Minnesota. *Vocational education survey*, Bulletin No. 199, U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Washington, 1917. Pages 391-429.

O'Leary, Iris Prouty. *Department store occupations*. Cleveland Foundation Educational Survey. Published by Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1916.

Richmond, Virginia. *Vocational education survey*. Bulletin No. 162, U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1916. Pages 227-254.

United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Unemployment among women in department and other retail stores of Boston*. Bulletin No. 182. Washington, 1916.

Winslow, Charles H., Director. *Report of Evansville, Indiana, survey for vocational education*, Indianapolis, 1917. Pages 375-390.

*Report of the Indianapolis, Indiana, survey for vocational education*, Indianapolis, 1917. Pages 157-185.

#### *6. Economic Background*

Store libraries should contain a few of the standard textbooks in elementary economics. The numerous recent publications discussing plans for profit sharing and for self-government or participation in the control of industries contain much which is applicable to store conditions. It is difficult to choose from the extensive list of books which might be of value.

in broadening the outlook of persons engaged in retail selling. We give only a few recent publications:

Briscoe, Norris A. *Economics of efficiency*. Macmillan company, New York, 1917.

Cadbury, Edward. *Experiments in industrial organization*. Longmans, Green & company, 39 Paternoster Row, London, 1912.

Commons, John R. *Industrial goodwill*. McGraw-Hill Book company, 239 W. 39th St., New York, 1919.

Nystrom, Paul H. *The economics of retailing*. The Ronald Press company, New York, 1919.

Page, Edward D. *Trade morals, their origin, growth and province*. Yale University, New Haven, Conn., 1914.

Personnel and Employment Problems. (A series of articles). *An Am. Acad.*, May, 1916.

Webb, Sidney. *The works manager to-day*. Longmans, Green & co., London, 1918.



## INDEX

*Advertising Department*, 24-25. See *Publicity*.  
*Advisory Board*, its composition and duties, 111.  
*Arithmetic*, knowledge of needed by store workers, 86.  
*Ayers*, Miss Christine M., 2.  
*Bibliography*, hygiene and physical culture, 134; knowledge of stock, 134-136; salesmanship, 136-137; office or clerical work, 137; organization of retail establishments, 137-138; economic background of retail selling, 138-139.  
*Book and Stationery stores*, young persons employed in, 15.  
*British Juvenile Labor Exchanges*, their policies, 93.  
*Bundlers*, age and education of, 58; per cent. employed as, 58.  
*Busy Season*, see *Seasonal Variations*.  
*Buyers*, the duties of, 23, 24, 29-30; training of, 106-110, characteristics of, 107-110.  
*Cannon*, Miss Bernice M., 1, 99, 121.  
*Cashiers*, duties of, 59-60; age and education of, 60-61; qualifications desired for, 61-62. See also *Inspectors, Examiners, Checkers*.  
*Cash System*, decentralized, 58, 60.  
*Cash Registers*, use of 30, 58, 59-60.  
*Certificates*, required of minors, 115-117.  
*Checkers*, see *Cashiers*.  
*Clericals*, reasons for large numbers, 49-50; sexes, ages and education of, 50; successful, 50-51; qualifications desired for, 51-53.  
*Clothing*, ready made, increased sale of, 13-15. See *Dresses*; also *Stores, Clothing*.  
*Clubs, Service*, 111-112.  
*Continuation School*, courses suitable for, 88-89.  
*Co-operation*, between schools and stores, 18; in development of education for store service, 94-96; between store education and employment departments, 112-113.  
*Customers*, disagreements with, 40; personal services rendered to 25-26; training in service to 105-106.  
*Delivery Department*, duties of employees in 62-63; chances for promotion, 63.  
*Demonstration sales*, 98.  
*Department Stores*, see *Stores, Department*.  
*Departments*, found in stores, 21.  
*Director, Educational*, 1; duties of, 99-107, 110-113.  
*Dishonesty* of officials a source of prejudice against store work, 34-35.  
*Dress*, of store workers, 40-41.  
*Dresses*, machine made, methods of caring for, 121-127.  
*Dry Goods*, see *Stores, Dry Goods*.  
*Dull Season*, 17. See *Seasonal Variations*.  
*Economics*, elementary, 103, 138-139.  
*Education* for store service, reasons for 17-18; instruction suitable for elementary schools, 82-86; for continuation schools, 87-89; for secondary schools, 90-99; for persons already employed, 99-106; an aid to promotion, 30-31; needed by executives, 113. See also *Director, Salesmanship, Clericals, Co-operation*.  
*Educational qualifications* of juvenile store employees, 36-39; superior standards of clothing stores, 37-38; certificates required for young persons, 115.  
*Elevator operator*, qualifications desired for, 64.  
*Employment Certificates*, required of minors 14-16 years old, 117-118.  
*Employment Department*, assists promotion, 30; should co-operate with educational department, 112-113.  
*Errand*, see *Floor, Cash, Teller*.  
*Examiners*, duties of, 59-60; characteristics and education of, 60-61.  
*Executives*, physique desired, 41; other qualifications, 63-64; large number required, 29-30; need of training, 113.  
*Extra store workers*, their numbers and duties, 75; ways of supplying, 79-80; their training, 101-102.  
*Financial Division*, its functions, 22-23.  
*Floor, Cash, Teller, Errand*, age and education of, per cent. of juveniles employed as, 58-59.  
*Geography*, local, training in prepares for store service, 85-86.  
*Ginn*, Miss Susan J., 1.  
*Greene*, Miss Elizabeth, 2.  
*Health* of store employees, ill-health prevents success in stores, 39; ill-health of women, 84; store dispensaries, 119; diseases treated, Table 5, 120.  
*Heermann*, Miss Caroline E., 2.

*High Schools*, co-operation with stores, 17-18; courses in retail selling in, 93-99.

*Hills*, Miss Bertha, 2.

*History*, economic, its place in store education, 86.

*Hopkins*, Miss Mary, 1, 99.

*Illiterates*, not employed in stores, 36; educational certificates of, 115-116.

*Initiative*, personal, means of stimulation, 110-113.

*Inspectors*, education, duties, qualifications desired, 59-62. See *Cashiers, Examiners, Checkers*.

*Jewelry stores*, young persons employed in, Table I, 14; Chart I, 15, 15-16.

*Juveniles*, numbers employed in Boston stores, 10-15; war-time redistribution of, 116.

*Libraries* in stores, 133-138.

*Manufacturing Departments*, 24, 25; juveniles employed in, 64.

*Markets*, buyers' knowledge of, 108.

*Markers* of stock, young persons employed as, their duties and qualifications, 54, 57; responsibility of buyers for, 109-110.

*Martin*, Miss Melba, 2.

*Men*, positions of in stores, 32-33; numbers in important occupations, 44; their greater tendency to shifting, 70.

*Merchandise*, training in knowledge of, 97-98; care of, 104-105; merchandise clerks, 51-52; merchandise manuals, 135.

*Merchandisers*, their instructions to buyers, 107-110.

*Merchandising*, organization of, 23-24; subsidiary departments, 24.

*Methods Director*, to study organization problems, 22.

*Minors*, see *Juveniles, Certificates*.

*New Employees*, instruction of, 99-100; reduction of cost of, 100; sponsor system for, 101.

*Norton*, Miss Helen Rich, 1, 98, 99.

*Occupations* of juvenile store workers, 43-44; Chart II, 44, Table 4, 119; description of duties of, 45-64.

*Operation Division* of stores, departments belonging to, 27; those whose functioning relates them closely to, 27-28.

*Organization* of stores; typical forms of for small and large stores, 19-20; central governing bodies, 20-21; descriptions of divisions found in Boston stores, 22-31.

*Part-Time* workers in stores, 17-18. See *extra store workers*.

*Personal traits* of store workers, undesirable, 39-40; desirable, 40-41.

*Personnel Division* of stores, 28. See *Director, Educational*.

*Physical development* of store workers. See *Health*.

*Porter*, Miss Elizabeth, 2.

*Practice* in stores by students, plans for, 90-91; educational value of, 92; a means of gaining knowledge of merchandise, 97-98.

*Prince*, Mrs. Lucinda W., 1, 34, 99, 137.

*Promotion*, opportunities for in retail stores, 29; aided by employment and educational departments, 30-31.

*Psychological tests*, not used in Boston stores, 38.

*Publicity Department*, 24-25.

*Receiving Clerks*, duties of, age and education, 53-54. See *Clericals*.

*Restaurants*, employees, training of, 64.

*Retail*, see *Salesmanship, Stores*.

*Revolution*, mercantile, 17.

*Salesmanship*, training in, importance for vocational education, 96; requirements for in secondary schools, 96-99.

*Salespeople*, sexes, ages and education of, 46; preference for young women, 46-47; qualifications desired for, 47-49; training of regular force, 103-106.

*Sample Group* of 21-year-old workers, how chosen, 116; method of classification, 117.

*Seasonal Variations*, in opportunities for store employment, 17-18, 65, 74-75; shown by months of issuance of certificates, 76-77, 116-118; training workers for, 101-102. See also *Shifting*.

*Secondary Schools*, training for store service given in, 90-99; attended by juvenile store employees, Chart III, 44, Table 4, 119.

*Selling*, extent of juvenile employment in, 45-46. See *Salesmanship, Salespeople*.

*Service Clubs* in stores, 111-112.

*Shifting*, causes of, 65, 74-78; sources of information about, 65-67; amount of, 67-70; variations between the sexes, 70. Tables 2a-2b, 71; characteristics of extreme shifters, 70-71; occupations between which shifting takes place, 72-74; reasons for, 77-78; educational significance of, 78-81. See *Seasonal Variations*.

*Social Status* of store workers, 33-34; means of raising, 34-36.

*Social Relations* of store workers, ability to maintain agreeable, 39-40, 53, 82-83.

*Special Sales*, training workers for, 102. See also *extra store workers*.

*Statistical Tables*, list of, 127-132.

*Stampers*, see *Markers*.

*Stock*, young persons employed in its care and preparation, 25; their duties, 53-56; their qualifications, 55-57; care of by salespeople, 47; knowledge of, 103-104; buyers' knowledge of, 107-108; plans for the care of the stock of machine-made dresses, 122-127.

*Stores—Retail*, proportions of juveniles employed, 10-11, 15; of adults, 11; types of retail stores and their relation, 12-14; vocational education for, 16-18; the organization of, 19-31; occupational distribution of juvenile employees in, 43-64; training for service in, 82-113; shifting in, 65-81, Chart IV, 74, Table 3, 78.

*Clothing*, increased importance of, 13; number and distribution of young persons employed in, Table 1, 14; educational standards of, 37-38.

*Department*, importance for vocational education, numbers employed, 15-17; education of employees, 37-38; shifting in, 69.

*Dry Goods*, numbers employed in, 15-17; education of employees, 37-38; shifting in, 67.

See also *Departments*, *Education*, *Executives*, *Financial*, *Operation*, *Organization*, *Etc.*

*System*, or operation division of stores, difficulty of assigning duties of, 26-27.

See *organization*.

*Vocational Education*, See *Buyers*, *Clericals*, *Continuation School*, *Director*, *Education*, *Libraries*, *Practice*, *Salesmanship*.

#### TABLES.

1. Distribution of a Sample Group of Young Persons Employed by Boston Selling Firms, 14.
- 2a. Number of Positions Held by 168 Boys Previous to Entering the Last Known Place of Employment, Distributed by Age on Entering the Firm, Based on Verified Application Schedules, 71.

- 2b. Number of Positions Held by 252 Girls Previous to Entering the Last Known Place of Employment, Distributed by Age on Entering the Firm, Based on Verified Application Schedules, 71.
3. Reasons for Leaving Store and Selling Positions as Shown by 222 Application Forms, 28 Personal Interviews and 329 Employers' Records, 78.
4. Distribution by occupations and Schooling of 1,000 Juveniles Employed in Boston Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores, (1908-1918), 119.
5. Diagnosis of Cases Treated in One Week by the Medical Departments of Four Boston Stores, 121.

#### CHARTS.

- I. Distribution by Types of Stores and Sexes of a Sample Group of Young Persons who Had Received Certificates Authorizing Work in Stores when They Were 19 to 21 Years of Age, 15.
- II. Distribution by Important Occupations of Male and Female Juvenile Employees in Boston Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores (Selected from occupational groups of 1,000 juvenile workers), 44.
- III. Education of Juvenile Employees Engaged in Important Occupations in Boston Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores (Selected from occupational groups of 1,000 juvenile workers).
- IV. Distribution of Total Number of Certificates Issued to 6385 Young Persons by Businesses, Divided into Last Certificates and Previous to Last Certificates; and Showing the Number of Previous Certificates for Each Business which were Issued to Young Persons Last Certificated for Stores and Selling, 74.







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